A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR ONE DAY IN EVERY MONTH.

By a Priest of the Society of Jesus.

Translated out of French.

liy Surin

In the Year 1698.

THE PREFACE.

THE design of publishing this Book is to furnish all sorts of Christians with an easy method of Retreat; especially such whose business will not afford them leisure for an Annual Retreat of eight or ten Days together.

It is hoped that the facility of making these Retreats will render them more usual; and therefore for the help of those who (being wholly strangers to these pious Exercises) stand in need of more particular directions, you will find some Chapters in the beginning of the Book and before the Meditations, of

the neceſſity of Retreat, and of the methods of doing it well.

The Body and principal part of the Book conſiſts of meditations on the great Truths of our Holy Religion; In which I have endeavour'd to chooſe the moſt proper ſubjects, and to put them in ſuch an order and treat them ſo at large, as may render them moſt capable of making a due impreſſion on thoſe who attentively and ſeriouſly conſider them. And becauſe our deſign in theſe Retreats ought to be to prepare our ſelves by a true change of Life for an happy Death, I have repeated the Meditation of Death every month, and have added a new exerciſe of

Preparation for it: which may be very uſeful if we put it in practiſe with ſuch diſpoſitions as it requires: And to render it more eaſy I have been very particular in ſpecifying the Sentiments we ought to entertain, and in inſerting the moſt ſuitable Prayers to inſpire thoſe Sentiments.

The laſt Part contains *Chriſtian Reflections* upon different ſubjects, to ſupply the place of thoſe Conſiderations whic are propoſed in other Books of Spiritual Retreat, for private Reading and entertainment. In the number & variety of which Reflections every Reader will find ſome thing profitable, according to his ſtate and diſpoſition.

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NOs infrascripti Sacræ Facultatis Parisiensis Doctores Theologi testamur nihil esse in hac traductione libri tui titulus *Retraite spirituelle pour un jour chaque mois*, aut fidei aut pietati dissonum. Datum Parisiis die 22. Julii 1700.

JOANNES INGLETON.

THOMAS WITHAM.

FIDEM facio testimonium hoc cui subscripserant Magistri Joannes Ingleton & Thomas Witham ejus esse authoritatis, ut ei facile credatur, & secure; ambo sunt Angli, in Facultate Parisiensi Doctores, Pii & eruditi, quorum Chirographum hic appositum probe novi. Die Augusti prima 1700.

PIROT.

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR ONE DAY IN THE MONTH.

CHAP I.

Of ſpiritual Retreat.

OF all pious Exerciſes there is none more proper to convert a ſoul then a *ſpiritual Retreat:* And it is perhaps the onely one that is never unprofitable. When every thing contributes either to pervert or diſtract us it is not at all ſtrange that the moſt awakening Doctrines of our Religion make but a light impreſſion: But when we retire our ſelves from the noiſe and diſturbance of the world, when we ſet our ſelves to meditate at leiſure on thoſe great Truths which we had never ſeriouſly enough conſidered, & which appear to us then in another manner, when

our application enables us to penetrate the true ſence of them, and every thing helps to diſcover all their conſequences, it is almoſt impoſſible for us not to be affected with them: Eſpecially ſince this is a a Time wherein grace flows more abundantly, and wherein our hearts are beſt diſpos'd to receive it.

The experience of the miraculous converſion of ſo many hardned ſinners, of the eſtabliſhment and Reformation of ſo many Religious Houſes; of ſo many lukewarm Chriſtians recoverd from their tepidity and become in a few Days fervent ſervants of God; is a ſenſible Demonſtration of the benefit wee may reap by conſidering in order and in ſolitude the great Truths of the Goſpel.

S. Xaverius, *S. Charles Borromæus*, *S. Francis de Sales*, and almoſt all the ſaints of theſe latter ages, have acknowledg'd that they owe their converſion and their progreſs in holineſs to theſe ſpiritual Exerciſes. And'tis in imitation of theſe Examples that they who apply

themſelves ſeriouſly to work out their ſalvation, and all well regulated Community's, put themſelves under an indiſpenſable obligation to conſecrate yearly at leaſt eight or ten Days to the ſame Exerciſes.

Let us not flatter our ſelves, tis very hard to keep our affections pure in the midſt of a world where every thing conſpires to defile them; We ſhall find it very difficult to live long among ſo much corruption and not be ſome way tainted with it. Time ſlackens the greateſt fervor, and the moſt heroick virtue ſtands in need of frequent ſupply's of ſtrength: To which end it is abſolutely neceſſary to retire our ſelves from time to time, and if we would breath a purer air we muſt ſeek it in ſolitude.

As too much worldly converſation alway's diſtracts, abates our fervour, and makes all out virtues languishing and weak: ſo it is only by recollection and retreat that we can recover our ſelves and regain new fervour.

The Holy Ghoſt deſcended viſi-

bly, only in the Desart, and when the Apostles were in Retreat, & S. Bernard declares that he could never hear the voice of God while he was taken up with worldly business; but as soon as he came to himselfe he retir'd into solitude to converse at leisure with his Divine Master, and to say with confidence, speak now my God for thy servant heareth, speak for Jam ready to obey thy will.

Quamdiu in exterioribus occupatus fui, vocem tuam audire non potui nunc autem reversus ad me ingressus sum ad te ut possim ad te audire & tibi loqui. Loquere ergo misericordissime quia audit servus tuus; loquere quia paratus sum audire. *S. Bern. de inter. dom. cap. 66.*

Can any man reasonably refuse to practise what is so much for his advantage, and what he stands so much in need of? Yet many who are convine'd of the necessity of Retreat, pretend that they have not time for it; and this is the common excuse of those who neglect it. But Good God! will this excuse be received? Our business takes up all our time, is not the care of our salvation a business? Can any thing in the world be of so great importance to us or concern us so nearly? Alas! we have indeed no other business but this; we were sent into the world onely for this End; God

has judg'd our whole Lives little enough for this great work, and can we pretend that we are not able to ſpare eight or ten days in a year for it.

A Fit of ſickneſs makes us quit all our buſineſs to look after our health; we think our ſelves bound to lay aſide all affaires for whole Months together, rather then neglect a ſuit at Law, or hazard the loſs of an Eſtate, or expoſe a Friend or Relation to ruine who depends wholly upon our care & diligence: Are we not as much concern'd to recover out of a ſtate of ſin as to be cur'd of a diſtemper? Is not Heaven worth more then an Eſtate? And what greater miſery can we fall into then to be viſibly in danger of damnation.

But we hope to make uſe of the firſt leiſure our buſineſs will allow us, to think of our ſalvation; Alas! if we don't reſolve to find leiſure for it, our buſineſs will never allow us any: Let us be not leſs indifferent for ſalvation, let us but look upon this as a real buſineſs, and we ſhall very eaſily find eight or ten days to employ

only in it, in this buſineſs of Eternity.

'Tis very ſurprizing that the moſt innocent ſouls who have the leaſt need of Retreat, never think themſelves ſafe without it; The moſt Apoſtolical men who live in the world only to ſanctify it, are yet in continual fear of being corrupted by it: Thoſe holy ſouls who never looſe the preſence of God are yet ſenſible of diſtractions even in the moſt fervent Exerciſes of their zeal: The moſt Heroick Chriſtians interrupt their labours from time to time, to recollect themſelves in ſolitude, and think it the only preſervative, againſt the corruptions of the world, and the moſt certains means to obtain new ſtrength.

Even the moſt exact Religious whoſe whole Life is a continual Retreat, do not find themſelves enough retired: And yet men of a very ſlender virtue in compariſon of them, who are every moment expos'd to the greateſt dangers, who live in a conſtant diſſipation of mind, in the midſt of a world which they

themſelves own to be extremely wicked, and in which they confeſs it is very hard to be ſaved; Can ſuch men as theſe imagine that a Retreat of eight or ten days is not fit for them? can they deceive themſelves with the falſe excuſe of want of time? when they are even weary of idleneſs; when they dont know how to employ themſelves; when the greateſt part of their Lives is ſpent in vain amuſements and diverſions. Can ſuch want time. Certainly if they would confeſs the truth they muſt own that they want not time, but will.

Our Saviours Parable of the high way where the ſeed of the word of God is trodden down and carryed away by the Birds of the Ayr, is a juſt deſcription of theſe buſy men, allways taken up with the affaires of the world: Now ſince we cannot be ſaved if we do not make a right uſe of the Grace of God, ſince this heavenly ſeed cannot ſpring up in an heart expos'd to noiſe and tumult, It is evident that we are under a kind of neceſſity either to retire our ſelves ſometimes from the world

or to renounce all hopes of being ſaved.

But ſome object, what will people ſay if they ſee me go into a Retreat, to think only on Eternity? How ſhall I be ridicul'd and laugh'd at? Good God! How long ſhall ſuch idle apprehenſions ſtifle the moſt moſt noble ſentiments, make men reject the grace of God, and abandon their beſt reſolutions! what can they ſay? that you have really a deſire to be ſaved, and that you take the beſt method for it: All wiſe men will eſteem you, many will imitate you, none but Libertines will blame ſuch a truly Chriſtian conduct; the rayllery's of ſuch are reall praiſes and you ought not at all to be concerned' what they ſay or think.

Men are not asham'd to paſs whole days at play and in vanity, of which they will certainly repent one day if they have not done it already; and can they be affraid to-ſpend' eight days in the compaſs of every year, in preparing for another Life? in ſecuring their Salvation?

CHAP II.

Of the great importance of making one day's Retreat every Month.

This not very hard to make men ſenſible that a ſpiritual Retreat is an excellent means to amend our Lives and work out our ſalvation; but the difficulty lyes in perſuading them that they may find time for it if they will: Eight days ſeem very long to them, and indeed there are many who cannot ſpare ſo much time together.

Multitude of buſineſs, the care of a family, want of health, the neceſſary duty's of their callings, are the reaſons or pretences where by ſome excuſe themſelves from making a retreat of eight days: but no man can pretend that he his not able to allow one day in a month to that holy Exerciſe. Is any thing more reaſonable then this? He may chooſe what day he pleaſes which renders it as eaſy as it is uſeful.

You are deſir'd toſpend one day

in a Month to take care of what concerns you more then all things in the world, to apply your selves to the great business of your Life upon which Eternity depends: that when you have spent a whole month in what you call business, & which is rather the business of others then your own, you would give one day to the only business that regards your self: that after having labour'd for the world, you would labour one day for everlasting happiness.

Would any man refuse one day in a Month to serve his Friend? Alas! how many do men loose every Month in vain pleasure, in play, in trifling folly'? you are desir'd to spend but one for your soul; you must surely be very indifferent for salvation, and very careless of what becomes of you hereafter if you refuse it. Especially since the following Chapters will render this practise so very easy that it seems impossible for any one reasonably to decline it.

How industrious are Merchants to improve every opportunity of-

acquiring Riches? How exact are they in ſtating their accounts from time to time, and obſerving how they thrive, what they have gain'd or loſt? Thus let us take one day at leaſt to examine carefully the ſtate of our Conſciences and what progreſs we make in virtue.

The great benefit of this Chriſtian practiſe is viſible; all ſorts of men may find good by it; 'tis very efficacious to reclaim ſinners from their diſorders and make them return to God, to confirm the virtuous and to elevate them to the higheſt degree of Chriſtian perfection.

Beſides the uſefulneſs of meditating on the moſt important truths of Religion, it is almoſt impoſſible that a man who ſets aſide his moſt ſerious buſineſs and retires from the world to employ one day every Month in the ſerious conſideration of the ſtate of his ſoul, ſhould not ſucceed. God who ſeeks us with ſo much patience when we fly from him, and who is not weary of offering us mercy not with ſtanding our refuſals, but calls on us even

when our earneſtneſſ after the world makes us deaf to his call, will never hide himſelfe from thoſe who come ſo often to meet him in the midſt of ſolitude: he will never refuſe to communicate himſelfe abundantly to thoſe who withdraw themſelves from all things to hearken to him.

Neither our condition nor our employements require this of us nor do we do it out of cuſtom or oſtentation which is ſo inſeparable from other acts of Piety: none of all theſe lead us to Retreat; nothing but a ſincere deſire to work out our ſalvation can bring us there; and can a ſincere deſire be ineffectual? Can it be attended with ſmall profit? 'Tis hardly poſſible that a man who ſets a part one day in a month to ſtudy the methods of living well, ſhould live diſorderly: Nor is he in danger of being ſurpriz'd by Death who ſo frequently and ſo exactly prepares for it.

But the importance of this Retreat will appear much greater if wee conſider the neceſſity we lye under to reflect often on the great verity's of

out Faith. Tis from the want of this Reflection that we see so few Christians live up to the purity of their Profession. We see but few truly virtuous tho they are oblig'd to be so in a very high degree, because men seldom reflect on the divine Truths: they content themselves with submitting their Reason to Faith, they think it enough to believe: But tho we do not find many infidels in the Church, yet I am afraid wee find fewer Christians who seriously consider what they believe And this is the Reason that what we believe of the End of our Creation, of the small number of the elect, of the pains of Hell, and of everlasting misery, make so slight an impression on us. *This* want of Reflection has allway's been and still is the usual cause of our sins, of our return to them after we have resolv'd to quit them, and of our *advancing no more* in piety.

For as without reflecting on what we read, we shall learn but little by our reading, so we shall make small progress in virtue if wee do not frequent-

ly reflect on what we believe. 'Tis generally from ſerious Reflections that great Converſions *ſpring*, and without it the moſt terrible Doctrines of Chriſtianity, the moſt amaſing accidents, and the moſt ſenſible Graces, will have no great Effect on us.

Can a man who attentively conſiders the vanity of the world and all its allurements, who reflects ſeriouſly on what he beleives of Hell judgment, and Eternity, who is affected with its rigours, and who foreſees its conſequences. Can ſuch a man refuſe to yield himſelfe to the divine Grace, which allways makes uſe of thoſe happy moments? Tis theſe Reflections that have peopled the deſarts, that fill our Convents every Day, and that recall ſo many ſinners from their Evill ways. If wee could once perſwade men to reflect often, we ſhould find their lives reform'd, we ſhould ſee the ancient fervour of Religious houſtes renew'd; this would be a ſure way to prevent the greateſt diſorders, and to make ſaints.

This is what you are to do in your Retreat; ſpend the day in reflecting ſeriouſly on the great Truths of our Religion, in examining your life, and meditating on the points of your Faith. 'Tis properly a Day Reflection which you may eaſily ſee muſt needs be uſeful, and that it concerns you very much to do it well. The Eight days retreat is for the ſame end, but beſides that the length of the Time is a falſe Pretenſe to ſeveral for performing it very careleſſly, this muſt be more profitable, becauſe that is uſually made but once a year, this every month.

This is no new Devotion; but the practiſe of the greateſt ſaints of Latter ages: Tis to this divine art that *Saint Ignatius* Founder of the Society of Jeſus confeſſes, he ow'd his progreſſ in virtue, and therefore he was ſo careful to recommend it to his Children. By theſe Retreats, *Saint Staniſlaus* a novice of the ſame Society preſerv'd his innocence, and acquird that tender devotion and that admirable Pie-

ty in a little time, which he practis'd in an ordinary way of Life. 'Tis by the same Retreats that *Blessed Lewis Gonzaga* more illustrious by his sanctity then by his birth, arriv'd to that sublime perfection for which we admire him. And 'tis without doubt from these Examples that we see it so frequently practis'd by those truly pious souls who desire to advance towards perfection.

But the first and great Example of these frequent and short Retreats is Christ himself who often withdrew from the multitude that followed him, and even from his own Disciples, to some mountain or desart, and the benefit which is daily receiv'd by this practise is an evident proof that it is pleasing to him.

We need not seek this solitude out of our own houses, we need not neglect our business or omit any of the Duty's of our calling; How many Sondays and Holidays are there in every Month? we may choose one of these, & that in which we shall have most leisure;

all that is desir'd of you is to retrench a visit or two to deny your selves some hours of diversion, and such frivolous occupations, that you may the better take care of your salvation. And can you be so much your own Enemy as to think Eternal happiness do's not deserve one Day in thirty?

You must certainly think heaven worth very little, if it be not worth your trying so efficacious and so easy a method to obtain it. In reality tho it cost you never so much, you cannot buy the blessing of a good Conscience too dear: that inward peace which surpasses imagination, that sweet confidence in the mercy of God, and all those innumerable advantages which are the constant fruits of this care of your salvation, can never be bought dear; is one day too much for this great work? Can one ask less? 'Tis astonishing that we must beforc'd to use arguments to perswade men to allow one day to make themselves happy.

We must expect that the Devil who is the declar'd Enemy our

ſouls, and who knows how many have been deliver'd from his power by theſe Retreats will certainly employ all his devices to hinder us from making them; to this End he will not fail to throw *rubs* in our way, he will repreſent an hundred little difficulties to our imaginations capable to diſhearten an irreſolute ſoul; ſometimes we ſhall imagine our ſelves indiſpoſed, ſometimes out of humour; he will ſuggeſt to us a thouſand falſe Reaſons to perſuade us to put it off till another time, that he may bring us under a kind of neceſſity of not doing it at all; for when he has once gain'd upon us to deferr it, we ſhall meet with a multitude of trivial affaires which ſhall ſeem preſſing, till by putting it off from time to time we come at laſt to neglect it wholly. Let us then oppoſe a generous and fix'd reſolution and good will to the artifices of the Tempter, and all theſe ſeeming difficulties will ſoon vaniſh.

This uſeful and neceſſary devotion is proper for all ſorts of Chriſtians

of what ſtate or condition ſo ever : 'Tis equally beneficial to Religious and ſeculars, they who are not yet converted, they who begin to ſeek perfection, & they who are already advanc'd in the way, will all find profit by it. Eſpecially the lukewarm careleſſ ſouls can never find a ſurer Remedy; their condition is already very dangerous and if this do's not cure them, it is much to be feared that they are paſt hopes.

Church men and Religious are oblig'd by their vocation to agreater perfection then other Chriſtians; this practiſe is an excellent means to obtain it, and ther is no ſort of men who can with ſo much eaſe ſet apart one Day in a month for it.

If after all this there be found among thoſe who are conſecrated to God, any lazy ſoul who under pretence of want of leiſure can not or will not find time for this holy Exerciſe, he will do well to conſider what *Saint Auguſtin* writes to his Bishop *Valerius* on the ſame ſubject, *What answer shall I give to God?*

Quid enim responsurus sum Domino judici? non poteram, cùm Ecclesiasticis negotis impedirer; si ergo mihi dicat, ferre nequâ si villa Ecclesia.... vir ad dicendum agriculturam meam vacationem temporis tibi defuisse causaris? quid respondeam, rogote? *Aug. Epist. 148. ad Valerian.*

saith that great Saint) *shall I tell him that a multitude of Ecclesiastical affaires took up all my Time so that I could have no leisure for Retreat to seek perfection? but if he reply, O wicked servant! You would have found leisure enough to absent your selfe to go to Law with any one that invaded your Rights, or that offer'd to deprive your Church of part of that revenu which is only useful for the relief of the poor, but you could not find time to retire for your own sanctification, though you knew how necessary it was to enable you to assist the Poor, and convert all sorts of people; what shall I answer to this reproach?* so what shall we answer to the question that will be put to us one day, if we be now so indifferent for salvation as not to find eight or ten days for serious meditation? But my God! what shall we answer if we refuse to spend onely one day in a month in Retreat?

The pretence of business being inseparable from every Day will not hold here; some days indeed

you may be oblig'd to follow it you are therefore at Liberty to chooſe what day you will: but if you object that it takes up every moment of our time, I muſt then give you the ſame Counſel which *S. Eucherius* gives to *Valerian*, *Break that endleſs chaine of buſineſs, the buſineſs of your ſalvation is the firſt and greateſt buſineſs you can have give it hence forth your firſt and chiefeſt care, let it be not only your principal buſineſs during your Retreat, but your only buſineſs which requires all your application.*

Abrumpatur illa interminabilis ſecularium negotiorum catena, primas apud eos curas quæ prima habentur obtineant, ſummas quæ ſibi ſollicitudinis partes, ſalus quæ ſumma eſt vendicet, hæc nos occupet jam non prima *S. Eucher. Epiſt. Lugd. in Epiſt. ad Valerian.*

CHAP III.

Of the Diſpoſitions in which we muſt be, to make the Retreat with Profit.

THE benefit of all pious exerciſes depends very much on our motives, on the diſpoſitions of our ſouls, and on the means of performing them. We can have no ill motive in ſo holy a practiſe, nothing but a ſincere deſire to amend our Lives and to increaſe in virtue

can lead us to retreat ? it is not likely we should have other motives ; selfe Love and pride cannot please themselves here because there is no noise or ostentation : Let us now take a view of the dispositions & methods whereby we may receive most profit. A sence of our want of it, and a persuasion that this practise may be very useful to us is one good disposition.

The rest which we ought to have if we would receive benefit ; are almost the same which the *Author* of the *retreat* according to the spirit & methode of *Saint Ignatius* sets down in his *Preface*, and they are chiefly five.

The first is an unfeigned desire to think seriously of our salvation ; a firm Resolution not to flatter our selvs, but to examine carefully and exactly without disguising any thing, the state of our souls, what progress we make in the way of Perfection, what benefit we receive by the sacraments, what ground we gain, whether we be victorious over our selves, and whether we be in-

ſuch a ſtate as we would venture to appear before God in to give an account of our Lives, In fine whether we be ſuch now, as we would deſire to be at the hour of Death.

But all our examinations and diſcovery's will be to no purpoſe, unleſſ we add to them a firm reſolution to correct what ever is amiſſ: this is not one of thoſe barren devotions which for the moſt part ſerve only to amuſe the imperfect and render them more faulty; they who have not a real deſign and an earneſt deſire to walk with God, will find but little ſatisfaction in it; their coldneſſ and indifference will ſoon make them weary.

The *ſecond Diſpoſition* is an humble diſtruſt of our ſelves, ſupported by a firm confidence in God, knowing that ſalvation is chiefly his work, and that without him we can do nothing; aſſuring our ſelves that ſince he hath inſpir'd us with the deſire of retiring once a month, he will not refuſe us the neceſſary graces to profit by it, And indeed this deſire of making uſe of the beſt

means to convert our ſelves to God is an evident proof that he who inſpires it would fain have us turn and live; and we find by experience that thoſe unhappy men who dye in their ſins are ſuch as made but very litle uſe of this excellent means *of Converſion*.

The *third Diſpoſition* is a free heart, that gives its ſelfe to God without reſerve, ſaying with *Saint Paul*, *Lord what wouldſt thou have me to do*; or with *David*, *My heart is ready, O God my heart is ready to do thy will*. The want of this diſpoſition is the cauſe that the moſt pious practiſes are without effect.

Act. 9. 6.
Pſal. 56. 8.

For when we think of an entire converſion we are too often irreſolute; we will, & will not; we know not what we would have; and very often we imagine that we deſire what we really and indeed do not deſire. We are for capitulating with our maker, we are for retaining ſome part of what we promiſe him, we deliberate on every thing he requires, we diſpute with

with him on every occasion. My God! what is it we fear? to throw our selves entirely on thee? we are convinc'd that 'tis the best thing we can do, but we are unwilling to do it, because we foresee that if we once give our selves to thee we shall soon grow weary of the Creatures; The communications of thy self to us will not fail to render us sensible of vanity, and make us loath them, and we are unwilling to be made sensible of it, or to loath them; this is what we fear.

The *fourth Disposition* is a punctual observance of the order and rule of our Rerreat, an exactness in every part of it, neglecting nothing that can contribute to our doing it well, judging nothing litrle that is capable of advancing so great a work as our salvation, being fully persuaded of this Truthe, that the great profit of this devotion depends on exactness in the least things. Whether it be that this carefulness is an evident proof of our sincerity, or that it prevails with God to refuse none of his Gra-

ces to those who neglect nothing to please him.

The *Fifth disposition* which is as it were the soul of all spiritual Retreats is, a perfect solitude both inward and outward, keeping our selves in a profound recollection and silence. And avoiding every thing that can any way distract us.

When an indolent soul is eight or ten days in retreat the Devil easily finds some occasion to disgust it with its holy employment: it thinks the time long when it has none but God to converse with. When it do's not find many spiritual consolations in prayer, when its thoughts are almost continually distracted, its want of fervour and the imperfection of its desires to be converted, render the most holy exercises of devotion very unpleasant; Eight days in Retreat seem an age, so that it counts all the hours and wishes for the last. But to these dangers we are not expos'd in one day's Retreat: 'tis but one day and if we make a right

uſe of it we may gain as much, and perhaps more profit then in a longer Retreat; which ought certainly to engage us to neglect nothing whereby we may improve ſuch a precious ſeaſon to the beſt advantage.

One Day in thirty is but a ſmall matter, let us give it heartily and cheerfully to God; let us be very exact in the performance of the ſpiritual exerciſes that we may have nothing to reproach our ſelves. One day is quickly over, and it will be our unſpeakable comfort to have paſt it well.

CHAP IV.

How we are to ſpend the Day of Retreat.

IT being left to every ones convenience to chooſe what day he pleaſes for this Retreat; we ſhould pitch upon the day wherein we may have the leaſt interruption, and which we can beſt have to our ſelves. If it be poſſible we ſhould

receive the same day: Men of business and tradesmen would do well to choose an Holiday, & Religious men some day wherein they can without distraction give themselves entirely to this holy exercise.

We should endeavour to spend halfe an hour in Meditation the night before to dispose us for the duty's of the day, at least, we should read attentively the preparatory Meditation compos'd for that end, and if we have opportunity we should at the same time & with the same design visit our Redeemer in the Blessed Sacrament.

We must observe a profound silence during the whole Day, to which we must add an inward recollection: we must spend it in exact solitude, as far as our condition will permit, but we are not hereby oblig'd to neglect any of the duty's of our calling, nor are Religious persons forbid their ordinary recreations, & much less the Dutys of their vocation. We must make this Day the three Meditations design'd for each Month, and pass an

hour in reflecting on the practical Truths of Religion; our *Confession* should be larger and more particular then ordinary that we may thereby endeavour to repair the faults of former *Confessions*, & chiefly to excite a true contrition in our hearts, wherein in all sorts of people and even the best Christians are too often faulty.

We must hear *Mass* and receive as if were to be our last *Communion*, and we must perform all the other exercises in the same disposition. Priests should examin themselves particularly whether their Lives are suitable to the Holiness of their Character, whether they celebrate with such affection as become men who are really penetrated with what they profess to believe. Let them offer that adorable Sacrifice with such a fervent Devotion that this Days Mass may be an atonement for the faults they have been guilty of in all the rest, and be a model of those they shall say for the future: making it their great business to profit by this, more than they have yet done.

We must be very careful to keep ourselves retir'd, and to avoid every thing that can possibly distract us: there is no danger of thinking the time long; we shall find employment for every moment; and one day so fill'd up is soon pass'd it is but a day, let us make it indeed a day of retreat; all the time we are not in the Church, we should keep our selves shut up in our Chamber; and indeed it would be well to do most of our spiritual Exercises in the Chamber, unless we have conveniency of being as much retir'd before the *blessed Sacrament*.

Because this Exercise is very usefull to all sorts of men, and the greatest part cannot meditate, I have calculated these Meditations for the greater number; to that end, I have made them long that they may find matter enough to take them up for an hour together: that the very reading of them may be truly a Meditation, and that they may be profitable.

Such as can meditate may make

uſe of what part of them they find moſt for their purpoſe; but theſe as well as the others muſt be very careful to avoid a fault to which moſt who meditate on the truths of our Religion are too ſubject. They muſt not content themſelves with believing them, and think their work done when they are once convinced; It is not enough to believe thoſe important Truths, the Devils believe as much, perhaps more then we and tremble. We muſt not ſtop at ſpeculation we muſt reduce them to practiſe. Our Meditations muſt all tend to reform us. 'Tis not ſufficient to read, and believe the Truth of what we read, we muſt attentively conſider every point and apply it to our ſelves. We muſt examine its conſequences, and make thoſe reflexions on them as we would do if we were on our death bed, when we know we ſhall have little or no time left to profit by them.

Let this be your way of Meditation; if you read, do it with atten-

tion ; pauſe upon each paſſage that affects you moſt , Put the queſtion to your ſelfe , is this true ? have I liv'd up to theſe Rules ? what is it they require of me for the future ? And then reflect ſeriouſly on the diſmall conſequences attending your negligence , if this double diſcovery do not produce more fruit then your former Meditations have yet done.

You need not trouble your ſelf to read the whole Meditation ; if one ſingle reflection take up all the hour provided you receive good by it you have ſpent that hour well ; And the reſt of the Meditation may ſerve you to read ſome other time of the day which is not abſolutely allotted to ſome particular exerciſe.

A right conſideration is very uſeful and therefore to be carefully perform'd. It conſiſts in reading with application the Reflections at the end of the Book : you may paſſ lightly over thoſe which *are leſſ* ſuitable to you , and dwell longer on ſuch heads as you find affect you

moſt; and which are moſt proper for you.

Beſides the hour uſually ſpent after dinner in conſideration, it would be well to allott half an hour in the morning for Religious men to reflect on the obſervation of their Rules, and others on the duty's of their particular callings; obſerving exactly wherein they have fail'd, and preſcribing to themſelves ſuch methods as may be moſt efficacious for their amendment: if we cannot ſpare half an hour we may divide the hour of conſideration, one half for general reflections, and the ſecond for thoſe that concern our particular Rules and the duty's of our Callings.

And here we are always to remember that we muſt not content our ſelves in theſe ſpiritual exerciſes to form good deſigns, and take ſtrong reſolutions of changing our Lives; it is to no purpoſe to reſolve though we ſeem to do it never ſo ſincerely, unleſſ we likewiſe fix the particular means, and methods, by which we may effectually pra-

ctiſe, what we have reſolv'd.

It is not our buſineſs to read much; let us read leſs and profit more; we should chooſe to read only what is uſeful to us. 'Tis not ſufficient to be able to ſay that we have read ſome ſpiritual diſcourſe, we muſt read with a deſign to grow better by what we read.

We have already obſerv'd that Religious perſons are not hereby diſpens'd from the exerciſes of their Community's, nor even from their uſual recreations; but having diſcover'd by their Examinations, the faults they are ſubject to in thoſe Exerciſes, and recreations, they should begin that very Day to reap the benefit of their Retreat, by beginning to correct themſelves and reform thoſe faults, carrying themſelves in every occaſion as *men* who are already chang'd, And being careful, now more then ever, to lift up their hearts fervently to God, and beg him to preſerve them from that diſtraction, and diſſipation, of mind, which generally accompany'is converſation.

The great design of this spiritual Retreat being to prepare us for Death, I have compos'd a third Meditation on the sentiments we shall have in that last hour, to be read in every Retreat. And it being the most proper subject for the End I propos'd to my selfe, I judg'd the same Meditation might be renew'd every Month.

The chief benefit we are to receive by this pious Exercises being a reformation of all the faults we have discover'd in our selves since the last Retreat, a more earnest longing for perfection, the getting the Victory over our favourite Passion, a more ardent Love to our Redeemer, particularly in the adorable Sacrament, and a greater exactness in all our Duty's, we are at the begining of each Retreat to propose these things to our selves as the end for which we make it. And seeing it is a direct preparation for Death, we are to come out of it in such a state, as we would desire to be in, if we were immediately to dye. And we must be care ful to keep our selves

in the ſame diſpoſition.

General reſolutions are commonly uſeleſs and to no purpoſe, our beſt way is to pitch upon ſome particular fault, which may be the ſubject of our daily Examination, and to regulate the means which we will every day employ, to reform it, till the next Retreat.

And the better to preſerve thoſe Good diſpoſitions we should first render thanks to God for the Graces he has beſtow'd on us during the Retreat. We should then offer up all our Reſolutions to him, and renew them with more earneſtneſs; beſeeching the Bleſſed Virgin to intercede for us with her ſon, that he would give us his Grace where by we way be render'd faithful to the End, and begging that she would undertake for our fidelity, which she can obtain for us.

But after all theſe Reſolutions, we muſt not rely ſo much upon them as to forget our weakneſſ; for nothing is more dangerous then too much ſecurity.

It very much concerns us, to be

exact in our watch, the first three or four Days; after this we shall find the difficulty is lessen, so that we shall execute our resolutions with Ease: The greatest difficulties are in the beginning, and the surest way to maintain our fervour is, without any delay to declare our selves for virtue.

A MEDITATION to prepare for Retreat.

THE subject of this Meditation is taken out of the *Parable* in the *thirteenth of Saint Luke: of the man who sought fruit on a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and finding none said to the dresser of the Vineyard, It is now three years that I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree and find none, cut it down, why cumbreth it the Ground? But his servant desir'd him to wait one year more that he might dig about it and dung it, and if after all his care it should be still unfruitful then he would cut it down.* Luke 13. 6. 7. &c.

FIRST POINT.

Conſider with what care God hath hitherto cultivated us that we might bring forth fruit. We came into the world not only a barren tree but corrupted and ſpoil'd by original Sin, fit for nothing but to be caſt into Hell Fire. The ſingular Mercy of God has preferr'd us to many others, has planted us in his Church by making us Chriſtians, or in the fertile field of a Religious Life, if by a greater effect of his Love he has call'd us to that ſtate.

Have we ever truly known the advantage of being planted in this holy ground, cultivated by the labours and water'd by the ſweat and blood of him who is both God and man? This ground in which we are hath produc'd thoſe Hero's of Chriſtianity, and bears every day a multitude of ſaints, of all ſexes, ages, & conditions. Thoſe excellent ſouls with the ſame manuring, that is with the ſame aſſiſtance that is given us, have and do every day bring forth fruit worthy of Eternal Life. They had no other

Gospel, no other Sacraments then we have; The Grace of God abounds at all times; ther Rules were not different from ours, only they were more faithful to those Rules, by the exact observation of which alone, they are become great saints. We have the benefit of their Examples, and many proper helps which they wanted.

Add to these advantages, the particular favours we have receiv'd from God; call to mind all the pains he hath taken to make us fruitful; all the good thoughts he hath inspir'd us with; all the pious Resolutions he hath excited in us since we had the use of Reason; his favours have been innumerable since we have been in his service: how often hath he nourish'd us with the food of Angels, his owne flesh? how often have we heard him speaking to our hearts? how often has he enlightned us? how many Graces have we receiv'd from him in our Retreats, and Communions? and and how many other favours hath he heap'd on us.

Half these are sufficient to make

a great saint; nay there are many blessed spirits now in heaven who never had all these advantages and yet they bare much fruit: They made admirable use of their talents; their Lives were full of good works, which have adorn'd them with merits whereby they now possess everlasting happiness, a just reward of their Fidelity. Let us now consider seriously and impartially, whether the same manuring & the spinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, have made us like bear much fruit.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that the fruits God requires of us, are not dry and barren devotions and appearances of virtue, which serve for the most part onely to amuse the imperfect, who with all their pretended good works pass their whole Lives in sloth & tepidity without growing better in any one point. Their specious virtues are but leaves, but gaudy out sides which deceive men and themselves too, making them take the effects of passion or humane respect, of Education,

or of their natural temper, for real virtues.

The Fruits which *Saint John* calls *Fruits worthy of pennance*, and *Saint Paul the Fruits of the ſpirit*, are the effects of a true love to God and a perfect charity towards our neighbour: They are ſuch as a ſolid Piety produces, an extreme horrour for the ſmalleſt ſin, a violent hunger after Righteouſneſſ, an univerſall conſtant and continual Mortification; a profound humility, a great exactneſſ in all the duty's of our Calling; they are, an exceeding averſion for every thing our Saviour hates, and an high eſteem for every thing he loves: The Victory over our paſſions, the reformation of our Lives and conduct, are the Fruits that he expects from us. This is the meaning of thoſe words, *Bring forth fruits worthy of pennance*, ſhew by your works & by the whole courſe of your Life that you are really converted.

Matt. 3. 8. *Gal.* 5. 22. 23. *&c.*

Matt. 3. 8.

Here let us examine our ſelves; Have we brought forth many of theſe Fruits? God hath been careful

to cultivate us these three, these ten years, that we might be fruitful; many would have been saints with much less Graces, and yet all have not perhaps made one good Religious, or one good Christian. 'Tis not the fault of the ground in which I am planted, it is holy ground and yields an hundred fold, even many of my accquaintance with less advantages bring forth much more fruit then I.

What benefit have I receiv'd by so many Masses? what am I the better for so many Communions; One single Communion is able to elevate a soul to a sublime perfection, yet I who have receiv'd it may be one or two hundred times have not yet reform'd any one fault. After so many Devotions am I more humble, more exact, more mortifyed? Do I love my God and Saviour more?

What is become of all the good thoughts I have formerly had? where is all my fervour? what is become of that inward peace and true pleasure which I have sometimes expe-

rien'cd in my Devotions ? what is become of all my holy Reſolutions ? and all my fair promiſes ? alas ! perhaps we find no traces of them all but a ſad remembrance which ſerves only to ſhew us, how far we are from the ſtate in which we ought to be.

Has not our ingratitude towards God augmented proportionably to the increaſe of his bleſſings ? And do's it not ſeem that his care to make us fruitful, ſerves only to make us more unprofitable ? But that which ought to humble us more is, that after having ſpent ten or twenty years inthe way of Perfection, we ſhould think ourſelves happy to be as much advanc'd as as we were when we began. Yet ſtill the time paſſes, and the year draws towards an end, when the owner weary of the barrenneſs of his Fig-tree after ſo much pains, is reſolv'd to cut it down & caſt it into the Fire.

THIRD POINT.

Conſider the danger to which we

expose ourselves while we are unprofitable: and what Reason we have to fear least we draw upon our heads the vengeance of God and the terrible sentence of Reprobation which he has pronounc'd against the Barren Tree.

How many Graces have we lost? Of how many have we depriv'd our selves? Those Graces which we have made useless by our unfaithfulness, are the fruits of the Death and of the blood of Christ were sufficient to convert the Heathens, and increase the number of Saints in heaven, after having augmented the number of true Christians on Earth. How many years together has the blessed Jesus visited us to see if we would bring forth fruit, and hath either found nothing but leaves or such fruit as the Vale of Sodom produces, fair to the Eye but rottenness and ashes at the heart? Has he not then just reason to say to us as he did to his vineyard by the Prophet, *What could I do more for my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* After all my care & pains to improve it, when

Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ & non feci? Is: 5. 4.

I expected it should bing forth good grapes it brought forth wil'd Grapes. May not our saviour make us the same reproach? we know it is too well grounded; what answer shall we give?

But let us fear and tremble when we come to consider the just vengeance which he resolves to take on this unfruitful vine, *And now I will shew what I will do to my Vineyard, I will take away the hedg thereof and it shall be eaten up, I will break down the walls there of and it shall be trodden down; I will lay it wast it shall not be prun'd or dig'd, but there shall come brayars and thorns;* and that its ruine may be without remedy, *I will command the clouds not to rain upon* such ungrateful ground which brings forth only bad fruit?

Et nunc vobis ostendam quid ego faciam vineæ: auferam sepem ejus, & ponam eam desertam; non putabitur & non fodietur, & ascendent vepres & spinæ, & nubibus mandabo ne pluant super eam imbrem. x. 5. 6.

We may easily understand the meaning of these words; let us now apply them to our selves; we have hitherto brought forth only leaves & rotten fruit, God will therefore deprive us of those great helps which we render useless. When that hedge is once taken away, that inward re-

collection once loſt, our hearts will run after every object, and we ſhall become a prey to our unruly Paſſions. God will ſpeak no more to our hearts: All the exhortations and Counſells of wiſe and zealous Directors will make no impreſſion on us; the ſource of Grace will be dry'd up; and what will become of a ſoul in this wretched ſtate? which every one that continues barren and unprofitable muſt certainly expect.

Is there no danger of our being like a dead branch which cutoff from its trunk, withers and is good for nothing but the Fire? Let us remember, the ſlothful ſervant was not condemn'd for loſing his Talent but for not improving it; and 'tis not only the tree that bringeth forth no fruit, but every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit ſhall be cut down, & burn'd

Matt. 25. 20. *&c.*

Matt. 3. 10.

We flatter our ſelves that God will wait a little longer, but perhaps *the ax is already laid to the root of the Tree*: this perhaps is the laſt offer of Grace, the laſt time that God

Jam enim ſecuris ad radicem arboris poſita eſt. *Matt.* 3. 10.

will call upon us, the last opportunity we shal ever have to become fruitful. God hath already waited so long, he hath so often warned and exhorted us, he has so often look'd whether we began to bear fruit after all his care & pains, finding his expectation not comply'd with, & justly incens'd at our long barrenness he is it may be ready to pronounce the sentence which was given against the barren fig-tree, *Cut it down why cumbreth it the ground*: throw that unprofitable tree into the fire: why should I suffer it any longer to take up the place of a tree that would bring forth good fruit.

Succide ergo illam ut quid terram occupat. *Luc* 13. 7.

Tis in consequence of this dreadful sentence, that so many who began well, but did not faithfully correspond with the divine grace have ended so ill. That so many who were call'd did not persevere, but have left their place and their Crown to others, who became wise by their Example. Have not we reason to fear it may be our case after all God has done to make us bear good fruit? have we

made ſuitable returns for all his pains? have not the few good works we have done been ſpoil'd by ill motives? And are we rich in virtues and merits?

O my God enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, for no man living is innocent before thee. I confeſs that I have been hitherto not only a barren but a rotten Tree, I have been unprofitable in ſuch fruitfull ground, and am good for no thing but to be caſt into the fire, but oh! *have patience yet a little with me*, not for a year but for one day, and I truſt by the aſſiſtance of thy grace to make ſuch good uſe of this day that I ſhall be no longer unfruitful.

Patientiam habe in me. *Matt.* 18. 29.

I dare hope that thou would'ſt not have inclin'd my will to ſeek the inſolitude, thou would'ſt not have inſpir'd me with the deſire, nor afforded me time for this retreat, were it not that thou art willing to defer the punishment I deſerve for my unfaithfulneſs to thy Grace, and for making no better uſe of thy aſſiſtance. Perhaps this is the laſt Day of thy forbearance,

bearance, & I have all the reaſon in in the world to apprehend that if I make not good uſe of this day, thou haſt determin'd to delay my ſentence no longer. But I rely wholly upon thy infinite mercy, and am reſolv'd ſo to ſpend this Day, that if it ſhould be the laſt of my Life, I may be able to appear before thee and preſent thee the Fruits of it.

JANUARY AND JULY.

FIRST MEDITATION OF MANS END.

FIRST POINT. *Man was created to serve God.*

SECOND POINT. *Man was created to save himself in serving God.*

FIRST POINT.

January & July.

CONsider that we came not into the world by chance, God had an end in drawing us out of nothing, and that end was no other then his own glory: he created us only to know, love & serve him; we glorify him by knowing and loving him, we shew our love by serving him, and we serve him when we keep his Commandments.

This was his End & design in our Creation, he could have not created us, but he could not create us for another End: the disorders of our Lives may indeed make us forget our

duty but it cannot change our ultimate End. Let us be never so dissolute it will still be true, that we are not sent into the world to heap up Riches, to acquire honours, to enjoy a multitude of pleasures & become great, we are sent into the world only to serve God. Kings and their people, the learn'd & the ignorant, the Rich and the poor are in the world only for this End. Tho there be a great difference in mens conditions and a subordination among them, tho some are born Masters and others subjects, they are all made for the same ultimate End, & all agree in this point that they are created only to know, to love & to serve God. January & July.

The fire is not more created to give heat, and the sun light, then man is to love and serve God, who has made that almost infinite number of Creatures only to help us in attaining this End, there being not one among them all which in its selfe do's not fournish us with a means to know God, a motive to love, and away to serve him.

January. & July.

We need only consult our own hearts on this subject, and we shall find that the extreme desire to be happy which is implanted in our natures, and the absolute impossibility of being so in this Life, are a sensible proof that man was not made for any created object. He must elevate his heart to God, & he will immediately find a full and perfect peace which alone fixes all his desires; he feels a sweetness which he never felt any where else, & which is an evident mark that God alone is his End, and he Center of his Rest.

Fecisti nos Domine ad te & inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.

We are then in the world only to serve God, this is the End of all Men; but do all men live for that End? this is the only thing necessary of which the son of God speaks in the Gospel, do we look upon it as such?

How earnest are we to accomplish our designs? to acquit ourselves, well of our employments, and to serve our Princes? Are we as earnest to serve God? do not men generally act as if they valued every thing but him? How often is the title of a man of the

Gown or of the ſword, prefer'd to that of Gods ſervant? How often do the Maxims of the World get the better of the Duty's of a Chriſtian? Every one has his deſigns and ſeeks his own Ends, ſurely we are not perſuaded that God is our End ſeeing we take ſo little pains to ſeek him as ſuch. January & July.

This Truth of Gods being our End is one of the firſt Truths we learn, yet it is that which we think leaſt of, and are leaſt affected with when we do think of it. We are us'd from our Cradles to hear that we are created only to ſerve God, but we are not at all touch'd with the meaning of thoſe words, which in all probability we never truly underſtood much leſs foreſaw their conſequences. For if be true that I live in this World only to ſerve God, then every one of my actions ought to be directed to him, and it may be I have not in all my Life done any one ſingle action onely for him.

This is the fundamental Verity of our Religion, do we live up to this

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important Truth? The whole Gospel is founded on this as its chief maxime, but who that examines our manner & our maxims can think that God is our ultimate End? We think of every thing but God, as if we thought him nothing.

We find time for every thing except for loving and serving God, we are delighted with riches, honours, and pleasures, God alone hath no charms for us: And yet where can we find any true pleasure but in him only? Thou Lord hast created us for thy selfe saith Saint Augustin, and our hearts will be allwayes uneasy and unquiet till they rest in thee.

Have we not found this by frequent experience in those very things whereof we have been most fond? were we satisfyed when we had obtain'd them? has not the very possession been sufficient to disgust us with them, and make us slight them? 'tis to no purpose to deceive our selves that we may sin with less fear, these very disgusts

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these continual disquiets, are a secret voice which admonishes us that we are not made for the Creatures, that every thing in the world is but vanity, amusement, and vexation of spirit, and that we are made only for God.

We cannot choose or make any other End to our selves, he who gave us our being hath put us under an indispensable necessity of returning to him; If he had left us at Liberty to make choice of God the infinite good for our last End, could we have thought of any other? and now that he has subjected us to the happy necessity of having no other, we are very little concerned to attain it.

Ingrateful men! are you not well enough provided for to have God for your last End? *How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him*; why will you be divided between God and the World? If God be your only master, why do you not serve him alone?

Usquequo claudicatis in duas partes? si Dominus est Deus sequimini eum. 3. *Reg.* 8. 21.

My God! what do I stay for?

January. & July. am I too young? have I too much health? am I afraid to serve thee too long if I begin so soon? I who am left in the world onely to serve thee.

Alas! I made no difficulty of spending the best part of my Life in unprofitable amusements in the service of the World, and now that I am disabus'd and convinc'd of my folly shall I refuse thee the rest of my Life? shall I balance one moment to love thee?

'Tis strange that I stand in need of so many reasons & reflections to resolve upon a thing of this importance, & of which Jam fully convinc'd, but it is yet stranger that all these reflections do not make me resolve.

Do I stay till Jam at last Extremity? till Jam told that I have but a few days left to think seriously of my Conversion?

No my God! it is resolv'd; thou hast made me only for thy selfe, and for the future I will be wholly thine: 'tis true I begin late to serve thee, but Jam resolv'd to have this satis-

faction in Death whenever it comes, that I did begin to serve thee. January & July.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that God who has created us only to serve him, is pleas'd by a singular goodness so to order it, that we cannot serve him without saving our selves. He did from the beginning design our Eternal happiness in creating us for his Glory; & seeing that Eternal happiness is no otherwise propos'd then as a reward, our whole life is given us only that we may deserve it by obedience to those Laws and Commandments which he hath made for that End. And the desire of happiness which is natural to every man do's as it were by instinct advertise us in the midst of our disorders that we are plac'd in the world only to work out our Eternal salvation in Heaven.

The Checks of our Consciences which are hardly ever quite stifled, cry loud to us that we put our selves in danger of being lost when we for-

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get our end never so little. And are not the fears of hell, and of the dreadful judgements of God, which shake the most hardned sinners, a sufficient monitor telling us incessantly that we are in the world only to be saved?

This is the only business of all the world, this is our last End, we are not here to obtain great Employments or dignity's, to render ourselves excellent in this or that profession, nor to establish a reputation by our good qualities; You are rais'd to that dignity, you are put in that dignity, you are put in that station, God has given you those qualitys, & made you successful only that these may be helps to your salvation, may be the means to bring you more easily to him your last End.

We are then created only that we may be saved, that we may avoid an Eternity of woe in Hell, and obtain an happiness in Paradise which shall never end. We are made only for Heaven, we are but banish'd men here, or at best but travellers who should rejoice when they find them-

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ſelves near the End of their journy and of their banishment.

But do we look upon our ſelves as ſuch ? Have we theſe thoughts of Heaven ? would any one that examines our conduct think that we believe our ſalvation to be our laſt End ? Men eaſily find means to attain their ends, ſurely there are but few who make heaven their great deſign ſince there are ſo few who take the right methods to obtain it.

The End of a Merchant in his Trade, of a ſcholar in his ſtudy's, of a Courtier in his carriage, of a ſoldier in the midſt of dangers is eaſily known ; but is it as viſible that every man in his ſtation and employment ſeeks onely God, and the ſalvation of his ſoul as his laſt End.

Yet what do's it profit a man to raiſe a great fortune to gain the whole world and looſe his ſoul ? What is there in all the world that can make him amends for the loſs of that ? It would have been much better for him

January & July. not to have been born, then not to be saved.

Let us remember that if we do not make God our soveraign happiness, he will be our soveraign misery; we may be without every thing else but we cannot be without this good; tho a man be poor, forsaken, despis'd or forgotten, if he save his soul he will be happy to all Eternity and want nothing; but let him be never so rich, happy, and esteem'd in the world, if he be damn'd he is miserable for ever.

What are those great & extraordinary men who fill'd the world with their brave actions, what are they the better for all the honour they gain'd, if they are damn'd? suppose you saw the richest man in the world on his Deathbed, one who had enjoy'd all sorts of pleasures, who had arriv'd to the highest pitch of Glory and greatness, who had been successful in all his undertakings, and had only neglected his soul; ask him, what do all your wealth, your greatness, and your

pleasures avail you? all these are past'd and gone as if they had never been, but your soul which you have lost, & those pains which are the sad consequences, of that loss, will never pass away. January & July.

Let us consider what thoughts we shall have in those last moments: what shall we then think of every thing that is now an obstacle to our salvation? How will all our great designs and projects which took us up entirely, appear then?

We venture our souls rather then disoblige a friend, then loose an opportunity of enriching our Children, or of distinguishing our selves in the world. What will our opinion of all this be when Death comes? will the remembrance of all past greatness comfort a man who knows he is falling into Hell? Will those pretended friends be much oblig'd to us for having ruin'd our selves to please them? shall we be much oblig'd to them who are the cause of our damnation, and for whose sakes we are lost?

Wretched Father! that labours and

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sweats, that ruins his health and shortens his Life to get an Estate for his Children, and is damn'd for his pains; who will thank him for it?

Who would not be rich if an earnest desire to be so were sufficient, we may be saints if we will by the help of grace which is never wanting, & yet we are unwilling to be so: And indeed if we are not saints it is because we will not.

'Tis surprising that men who love themselves so much should reflect so little on a matter of this consequence: that men who in all other things are wise and prudent, should yet every day go out of the world without having once seriously considered why they were sent into it, whence they came, and whither they are to go after Death. And yet cheat themselves at last with an appearance of conversion.

O Divine saviour! where is that passionate desire of our salvation which mov'd thee to do such great things? How long wilt thou suffer so many souls to be lost, for whom

thou haſt paid ſo great a price? Art not thou ſtill our God, and are not we thy people? Canſt thou ever forget that thou art my ſaviour? I have not indeed made a right uſe of my happineſs in being deſign'd only for thee, I have forgot thee to place my affections upon the Creatures. I have wander'd out of the way that leads to my laſt End, and refus'd to obey the voyce of the good shepherd who call'd me. But now I ſee and repent of my wandring; however unfaithful I have been, the ſence thou haſt given me of my unfaithfulneſs, makes me hope that thou wilt have mercy on me: thou lovedſt me when I did not love thee, and when I did all I could to make thee hate me thou ſought'ſt even when I fled moſt from thee. O my God! wilt thou refuſe me now that I am reſolv'd to love thee? wilt thou hide thy ſelfe from me now that I ſeek thee? I cannot feat this from ſo infinitely good and merciful a God. January & July

I acknowledge that I was made

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only to love and serve thee, and I am resolv'd O my God by the assistance of thy Grace that I will both love and serve thee. And I hope in thy mercy that since thou hast patiently born with my disobedience so long thou wilt now be so gracious as to pardon and forgive it.

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF THE MEAN'S which are given us to attain our ultimate end.

FIRST POINT *Of the means common to all Christians.*

SECOND POINT *The particular means proper for each Christian.*

FIRST POINT

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Consider that God not content to have created us for himselfe as for our ultimate End, has out of his great goodness indispensably engag'd us to seek him, by those numerous meanes which he hath given us to attain that End. Every creature taken in its selfe is an help to our knowledge & Love of him; And 'tis only our abuse of them that makes any of them hinderances. The happiness and misfortunes of our Lives, the chastise-

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mens wherewith God corrects our unfaithfulness, & our very faults, may be so many furtherances of our Salvation. Even the devices and temptations of our mortal Enemy the Devil, may be a means to save us.

Without grace it is impossible to attain our ultimate End; all our endeavours without it are vain; 'Tis an article of Faith that we may be wanting to the Grace of God: there is not one soul in Hell who is not damn'd by his own fault.

We are weak the occasions of sin are many, and our corrupted hearts are violently enclin'd to it, but can we have greater assistance to prevent our falls, and to raise us up again when we are fallen? Are we sensible of the facility with which we may work out our salvation if we will have recourse to those Excellent means which God hath put into our hands? So many Sacraments whereby all the merits of our Saviour are apply'd to us, in which we are as it were bath'd in his blood,

where in our ſouls feed on the Body and Blood of that Divine Redeemer, are without doubt moſt effectual and eaſy means to attain our great End. January & July.

It was eaſy for the Diſciples to be ſaints who had their Divine Saviour always with them: And ſhall it be more difficult for us who have him continually preſent in the Euchariſt? their happineſſ conſiſted in having their requeſts granted; what ſhould hinder our obtaining of him as they whatever we deſire.

Another very effectual means is frequent Prayer, for our Saviour hath ſolemnly engag'd his word that he will grant whatever we ask in his Name.

His promiſes are without exception, not limited to any Sort of men: Do but ask. Every body ſurely is able to ask, and they who will not do moſt certainly valueHeaven at a very low rate ſince they think it not worth their asking.

If we had only the Sacrifice of the Altar, would not our Salvation be ſure? what Grace, what aſſiſtance

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can we need which our Redeemer who gives himselfe as an earnest of his grace cannot obtain? And how can we doubt his so often reiterated promises that he desires our happiness? We are all debtors to the justice of God, and stand in need of extraordinary helps; One Mass, one Communion bestows on us a treasure sufficient to pay all our debts and supply all our needs. Let us offer up that Host to his Eternal Father. Who we are sure cannot but be pleas'd with it; It is sufficient to blot out the sins of all mankind; and whose fault will it be, if it do's not efface ours?

Certainly if God had left it to us to choose the most proper means of Salvation, we should never have been able to find so many, so easy; and so effectual; we should never have thought of proposing what Christ has done for us. And yet what use have we hitherto made of those means? And what must we think of our selves and of our unprofitableness under them? surely we have no great mind to be saved if we lose our

souls in the midst of so powerful and such easy means of salvation; what excuse shall we inuent what shadow of pretence can we have to justify our selves, if we neglect them. January & July.

What shall we answer to the reproaches of the Heathens? What shall we answer when our Saviour himselfe reproaches and confounds us with the example of those Pagans who only out of a vain desire of Glory, & for an imaginary recompense, were such lovers of virtue such haters of vice, & even superstitiously devout? what would they have done if they had enjoy'd our helps.

What regret must a Christian have who is damn'd with all those advantages? what shall I be the better for them if I be damn'd? And what must I expect if I make no better use of them for the future?

SECOND POINT.

Consider that besides those general helps common to all Christians every man has some means proper for

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him, whereby he may easily become a great Saint. His temper, his education, parts: his very passions if rightly manag'd will much contribute to it. The Grace of God commonly makes use of every one of these, and whether our inclinations be good or bad, we may with a little resolution make them all serve to our progress in virtue.

Every sickness and unfortunate accident of our Lives, is sent on purpose to bring us nearer to our last end, by separating us, or at least by weaning our affections from sensible objects, which take up too much of our time and thoughts.

But the surest and most effectual means are those which every man meets with in the condition wherein God hath plac'd him. Each state of Life is a different way by which the divine Providence leads us to our ultimate End. It is a great Error to think that wee cannot attain Perfection without doing something extraordinary; we may be very eminent saints only by acquitting our selves exactly of the duty's of our callings.

The Virtuous Woman, that Heroine so highly prais'd in Holy writ, acquir'd all those merits only by taking care of her Family. And Jesus Christ himselfe for thirty years together, thought he could do nothing more becoming him, then to discharge the duty's of that humble and poor condition which he had chosen. January. & July.

All o her ways are subject to illusion; we deceive our selves by doing much unless we do what we ought, he do's what he ought who fulfills the will of God, which we are sure we fulfill when we are exact in the smallest duty's of our callings.

They who live in the world need not seek means of Sanctification out of their ordinary course of Life, in the dutys of each day they will find matter enough to make them saints: and they are inexcusable before God if they neglect those means, since they take much more pains for the World, then he requires them to take for him, that they may be saved.

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Religious men find in their state, all, and indeed the only means of perfection that are proper for them; which consist in a punctual observation of their Rule and vows. Those Rules have already made the Saints that are honour'd in their Order, and he who has embrac'd them can never hope to be a Saint by any other means then the observation of the Rules.

Don't pretend that they seem of small consequence, that they do not bind you under pain of sin; remember there is nothing little in the service of God. Did you enter into Religion to seek perfection only when you were forc'd to it? How will you distinguish your selfe from other Religious, if it be not by exactness in your particular dutys? And how will you pretend to merit supply's of grace proportionable to your necessity's, if it be not by this exact observation of your Rule.

We need not wonder that so many Communions, & so many helps have no effect on us; and that after all those advantages we are more lukewarm,

lukewarm, and have more reason to fear, tho we seem to have made great progress: 'tis because we neglect the particular meanes which we have in our own hands, this renders all the rest ineffectual: As the best Physick do's us more harm then good when we neglect the least precautions. January & July.

Let not a Religious man who is careless of observing his Rule expect any benefit by his Communions; Let not a worldly person who hath no care of his family, who neglects the Duty's of his particular station, expect to be the better for all his pretended good works, How should we like a servant that meanes never so well, that do's never so many good things, if he do's not his Duty: And how can he do his Duty who do's not do what his Master commands?

Let us now reflect seriously on our conduct; what use have we made of the meanes of salvation? have we improv'd the particular?

God will not only examine and severely punish the Evil we have done, but the Good we have not done

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when it was in our power, and the good we have not done well. Are we ready to give an account of our Lives immediately? all the actions of our Lives should have God for their End, and can we find one among them all, that was done only for him?

Let us inquire what can be the cause, that the Sacraments, and the spiritual Exercises have hitherto done us so little good. Let us impartially examine what use we have made of the meanes of perfection that are in our hands. If we be engag'd in the world, how have we discharg'd the duty's of our condition? If we be Religious or Ecclesiastiques, how have we acquited our selves of our obligations, and observ'd our Rule? By this examination we shall be able to excite an hearty sorrow for our past faults, and to make such Resolutions as may be effectual for our future amendment.

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS we shall have at the hour of Death.

FIRST POINT. *The ſentiments of a dying man who has lead a ſinful, and lukewarm Life.*

SECOND POINT. *The ſentiments of a dying man, who has liv'd a fervent & virtuous Life.*

FOr the better fixing your imagination, and to avoid diſtraction, ſuppoſe your ſelfe upon your death-bed having but a few hours to live, reduc'd as you will be one day, to the laſt extremity of weakneſs, almoſt motionleſs, continually unquiet, your ſoul diſorder'd with fear, your heart already ſeiz'd by Death's convulſions, your breath failing, a cold ſweat ſpreading its ſelfe over your whole body, which ſmells already like a dead Corps, your cheeks hollow, your colour January & July.

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chang'd, your hair moist with a mortal damp: your eyes sunck, staring frightfully, leaving you only sight to discover your pitiful condition, & just ready to close themselves for ever. Suppose your selfe abandon'd by all you lov'd in the world, and upon the point of expiring in the Arms of some Domestick, and unknown person.

Then for a second Prelude beg of God to assist you with his grace that you may be throwly affected with the consequences of that important moment where on Eternity depends, & so penetrated by it, that it may make the same impression on yon now, as it will do when you see it approach, & that you may be there by incited to take the surest methods of Salvation.

FIRST POINT.

Consider how strangely a dying man is chang'd; he who a few days ago was strong and in perfect health, enjoying his Riches and honours and contriving great projects, is all on a sudden confin'd to his bed,

reduc'd to extremity, unable to help himselfe, incapable of pleasure, forc'd to abandon all, & to be abandon'd by all, My God! what is man? tho never so Rich and great; since a few hours sickness are able to make him useless to all the world, and render all the world of no use to him.

We think our selves happy when we have Riches enough to serve us many years, but alas! what are we the better for many years, riches if we have not many years, to enjoy them?

What is able to comfort a sinner in this miserable condition? when the remembrance of past pleasures leave only a mortal regret behind them; & the fear of future pains makes him already begin to feel them. When God and man, when every thing in the world conspire to terrify and affright him. How do the tears of Friends cut him to the heart, and the Assistants encrease his apprehensions? how sensible must the grief of his wife, the tears of his Children, and the hurry of his servants

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be to him? with what fear has he recourse to desperate remedies, and what a terror is it to find those remedies ineffectual?

And when to calm his frights his Confessor approaches, can we think that the sight of him allay's his trouble? he sweats & is quite confounded; and in this agony he is to prepare for death, but is this a fit time, is he in a condition to prepare? when fear and trouble has weakned and clouded his Reason, how can he go about it? He speaks not his own thoughts or sentiments, he onely repeats what he hears his Confessor say, he neither knows what he says, nor what he ought to say.

Even Jesus Christ himselfe whose presence in this last hour is the great consolation of a dying Saint, visites the dying sinner only to upbraid him. & make him more sensible of his impiety's. And indeed what benefit can he expect from the last Sacraments being so ill prepar'd to receive them?

With whom shall he find ease?

For as ſoon as he has receiv'd the rights of the Church, his friends, and Relations retire. Let us now conſider what his thoughts will be when the Prieſt only ſtays to preſent him the Crucifix, & inform him that there is no farther hopes of recovery, that now being bereft of all Creatures, Jeſus Chriſt alone muſt be his refuge and conſolation. Jeſus Chriſt crucifyed muſt be now your only hope, you muſt ſeek ſtrength in thoſe ſacred wounds, againſt the fear of Death, for they are able to ſoften all its rigours, to ſwee ten its bitterneſs: receive then Dear Brother this comfortable Object, in whoſe Arms I leave you.

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This is the End of all the vain projects, of all the greatneſs, and pleaſures of worldly men; In what a condition is a libertine who has neglected Jeſus Chriſt all his Life, which he has ſpent in ſin and pleaſure and in an extreme careleſsneſs of Eternity? what conſolation can he find now in holding a Cruci-

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fix in his hand?

If he has no ressemblance of a crucify'd Jesus: he was never sensibly affected with the terrible verity's of our holy Religion, but laugh'd at the most serious Exercises of Piety, what thoughts can he have when he has nothing but a Crucifix to entertain himselfe withal?

He may indeed make a good use of the little time that is left; but alas! his weakness and feares do compose his Reason, and do not leave him the Liberty that is necessary to use it well.

Yet the Sick man dyes and there is little hope that the prayers of the Church should give him any consolation, they are indeed full of comfort for those who dye well, but what comfort can they afford a dying sinner whom every word reproaches with the disorders of his Life?

What terror must it be to him to hear the Priest pronounce those words, *Christian Soul go out of the world*; to him who lov'd the world

Proficiscere anima Christiana de hoc mundo.

so much, who perhaps never lov'd any thing else nor ever made one step towards Heaven? Go out, there is no more to do; you must leave all your delights, tho you be never so fond of them, & unwilling to quit them; you would leave nothing but you must dye to all. January. & July.

The Charitable recommandation, *May'st thou enter into the habitation of peace, and may'st thou dwell in the holy peace of Sion*, can be no comfort to one who knows they have no reason to make that prayer for him. Hodie fit in pace locus tuus, & habitatio tua in sancta Sion.

How can be expect any benefit from that petition, *pity O Lord his sighs, and let his teares prevail with thee?* if his grief proceeds only from his fondness of the world, and if he weeps because he is forc'd to quit it and because he can sin no longer. Miserere Domine gemituum, miserere lachrymarum ejus.

The priest go's on, *Look O Lord upon thy creature, made by thy selfe, and not by strange Gods, own the work of thy hands*; But if the dying man has alwayes lov'd the Creature more then his Creator, if his Life Agnosce Domine Creaturam tuam non à Diis alienis creatam, sed à solo Deo vivo & vero.

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has not been at all conformable to the maxims of Christ, how can he be like his Saviour in this last hour? what must he expect seeing he is not like him, and how terrible must his apprehensions be of what is to come after Death?

Great God! in what a condition is a dying man, torn with grief and despair without hope? If he have yet his sences left, every thing that presents its selfe, every thing he hears, is an addition to his fear & trouble; and when he has lost his sences, when external objects can make no more impression on him, then the remembrance of all his Sins, of all the ill he has done, of all the good he has neglected when it was in his power, or which he has done ill, racks and torments him more.

How many are his Reflections? yet all to no purpose: he then sees his Error but it is too late to reap any benefit by it: he repents of a great many things, but that repentance adds new force to his torments, because he knows it will do him no good. How dos he grieve for not having

done his duty when he was able? how do's he despair of being able to do what he has left undone? he would not reflect seriously on the great Truths of the Gospell while he might have done it to good purpose, now he reflects, and reflects at leisure, but 'tis a Cruel leisure, for all the fruit of those Reflections is despair & rage. January & July.

Now he is sensible of all the disorders of his Life, he is now convinc'd of his Error, but its too late. Oh! what must the sentiments of a person consecrated to God be, when he sees his Eternal condition ready to be decided, & remembers how imperfect he hath been in a state which requires so much perfection? to what end did I make such a doe in leaving the world and entring into Religion? *Was* it to follow the maximes of the world there? God hath called me by his Grace to an Ecclesiasticall or Religious state, have I made good use of that Grace? I quitted all and chose that perfect way of Life, that I might dye in peace by dying like a saint; but

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(wretched Creature that I am) did I consider that an happy Death is the consequence of an holy Life? How often have I taught others this doctrine? O! why have I made no better use of what I taught? How have I been distracted in prayer? how many Masses and Communions have done me no good? how often have I confess'd my sins without leaving them? how many graces have I rendred useless? how many good works have I lost for want of right motives? O my God! why have I taken so much pains to lose my self? have left my Relations? been insensible to their tears and all their caresses? surmounted so many difficulties that I might secure my salvation? And, by loving my ease too much, by setting my heart on trivial matters which one would have been asham'd of in a secular state, I have been a lukewarm Religious; I am now on my death bed torn with remorse, oppress'd with fear & trouble, and having cause to doubt positivly of my salvation. Oh! 'tis terrible to pay so dear for such a Death.

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And indeed what elſe can be the conſequence of a careleſs Life? when we come to conſider ſeriouſly as we ſhall certainly do then, that the leaſt grace we have abus'd was ſufficient to convert an infidel, & yet ſo many of them have ve not made one good Religious, or good Chriſtian. When we ſhall diſcover a multitude of faults, which we took no notice of before, or which through the violence of our paſſions, and our indifference we took for ſmall ones, but which now appear to be great ſins. What comfort can an imperfect Religious find then? Will he ſeek it from the ſaints of his Order? he hath diſhonour'd them by his conduct. Will he ſeek it in his Rule? he has not obſerv'd it. Will he hope to find comfort in God? he hath offended and incens'd him by ſerving him ſo ill, after having receiv'd ſo many favours from him.

How diſmall muſt his apprehenſions be after an irregular Life? when he reflects, I have but a few hours to live, If I be out of the ſtate

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of Grace I am loſt for ever; and I have not only ſome reaſon to fear that I am not in the ſtate of Grace (which fear the greateſt ſaints have) but cauſe to doubt poſitively that I am not.

In this extremity all that he hath heard of judgment, of Hell, & Eternity come afresh in his mind & affright him in a terrible manner. 'Tis wonderful that he who ſome few days ago was full of doubts and uncertaintys, is now fully convinc'd of the truths which he was then ſo unwilling to believe. Behold his fears, ſee how he trembles and quakes at the thoughts of Death & judgment.

We ſometimes meet with men who turn the moſt ſerious exerciſes of Piety into Rallery, and call the exactneſs of thoſe fervent ſouls who are punctual in performing the ſmalleſt dutys of their ſtation, preciſeneſs and weakneſs. Let theſe men who imagine they have reaſon to cenſure and act thus, continue to think ſo at this hour, and maintain their character of wits to the laſt if

they can. If they were in the right, let them pleaſe themſelves now with calling exactneſs, and devotion, preciſeneſs, and ſcrupuloſity. They have made a falſe conſcience to themſelves, & under its ſhadow they lull themſelves in a falſe ſecurity, let them now maintain that imaginary ſyſteme. Alas! 'tis the remembrance of theſe very things that now drives them to deſpair. January & July.

While we are in health, our paſſions blind us, ill examples ſeduce us, we are charm'd with preſent objets, the hurry of buſineſs takes us up, and we induſtriouſly avoid ſerious Reflections on the Truths of Religion, even our Faith is halfe dead, ſtifled by the corruption of our manners, but at the approach of Death it revives to terrify, & diſtract us, like the Faith of the Devils, it makes us tremble but do's not convert us.

Every body is convinc'd that when Death comes we ſhall repent our neglect of mortification, our worldly voluptuous Lives, our ha-

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ving done so very few good works, and having liv'd no better, and yet which is exceeding strange, after all these reflections, after being fully convinc'd of them, how few take pains to amend their Lives? My God! how long shall we make these useful rections, and yet live so unlike Christians?

Death makes us see clearly; then our prejudices, and prepossessions vanish; formerly we saw but were not sensible of the vanity & emptiness of every thing in the world, but now we both see and feel it and wonder at our stupidity in finding it no sooner, and in not discovering our double want. We find we were deceiv'd and at the same time find to our unspeakable anspeakable anguish that we are ruin'd by that Error, and that we cannot recover what it has made us loose.

A Dead man is indeed a mournful, but an useful sight, very proper to disabuse us, and to alienate our affections from the pleasures of this Life; the most accomplish'd man in the World inspires horror

when he is dead, immediately all is silent, the Corps is cover'd, the Curtains drawn, and every body retires: where is now his beauty and good miene? where is his agreeable humour? what is become of all his projects & great fortune? you see what is the end of all. But what is become of his soul? & what must be done with this corrupted body, which begins already to grow offensive? Not withstanding all its greatness, notwithstanding all its charms, though the most Lovely in the world, every body fly's it: Husband, wife, Chilldren, Relations, Friends, neighbours, servants, are all striving to be rid of it: those who lov'd it best are most desirous to have it carried away, and most uneasy to hear it spoken of; Its nearest and best friends hire men to throw it to the worms, they make hast to nail it up, they hide it in the ground, and we cannot without horrour think of its condition a few days after. January & July.

You are forgot as soon as bury'd, every one returns to his business,

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your Friends ſeek other Friends; take new meaſures, and hardly think any more of you. They concern themſelves no more about you then if you had never liv'd, no body fears your anger nor deſires your favour, they often undo all you had done, within a little time you are not ſo much as talk'd of.

At your Death indeed ſome teares may poſſibly be ſhed by your Relations and Friends, for the loſs of ſome pleaſure or advantage which they expected from you: teares are common, but the greateſt part of thoſe teares are only grimace: they will ſoon be comforted; eſpecially if they gain by your Death, & any part of your Eſtate falls to them. We may gueſs what others will do for us, by what we have done for others after their Death. Our grief for a friend and Relation has been ſoon appeas'd, and though they were ſo wretched as to have ruin'd their ſouls for our ſakes, have we thought our ſelves much oblig'd to them?

After all this can we make any

great account of the world and its pleasures? 'Tis indeed very surprising that we think so seldom of Death, but tis much more surprizing that we can think once of it, and not be converted. How many live as if they were sure they should never dye, & were to dye more then once? as if they should lose nothing by dying ill, or as if they could recover that loss after Death? Is not this our case? And what will our thought, be on a Death Bed, when we call to mind the reflections we now make, if we reape no benefit by them? January & July.

SECOND POINT.

Consider how happy a thing it is to dye when one has liv'd well; Death is the punishment of sin, it can therefore be a real trouble only to those who are defil'd with sin: It must needs be a subject of great joy and pleasure to those who have led a virtuous Life. How can they dye unhappily? since they dye saints.

The Death of a Righteous man saith the Prophet, is precious befo-

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re God; & consequently dear to him, for one alwayes esteemes and takes care of what is precious. 'Tis no matter to a good man to dye destitute of all humane aid, tho he dye suddenly, he never dyes unprepared, God takes a peculiar care of him, he dyes happily because his Death is precious in the sight of his God.

Every thing ought to contribute to his consolation; how great must his joy then be, when he reflects that he has liv'd like a Christian, & led a penitential Life? The sight of what is to come will most certainly alleviate the pains of his present condition.

He is now got over all the difficulties in the way to heaven; fasting, mortification, labours, austerity, pennance, all is over. What a satisfaction is it in Death to know that the hath done all the good that was required of him, and avoided the ill which he might have done? especially when he thinks on the remorse of Conscience which would have tormented him if he had done otherwise.

The longeſt Life ſeems then but a moment: from the Cradle to the Tomb; what a ſatisfaction muſt it be to a dying Chriſtian, that inſtead of omitting he has done his Duty? what would the greateſt fortune avail me, ſays the dying man, what good could powerful friends do me now? If I had ſpent my time in pleaſures, and follow'd the maxims of the world, of what uſe would they be to me now? I therefore condemn now, and will condemn to all Eternity the maxims of the world; all the Frienships on Earth cannot deferr my Death one moment; I am for ever banish'd from all Company, all the pleaſures of the world are not able to moderate one of my leaſt Pains, and if I had fixt my heart on them I should now have nothing left, but the regret of having weary'd my ſelfe for my own ruine. He applauds himſelfe for having been ſo wiſe as to contemn thoſe vanity's which would leave him now, whether he would or no, if he had not left them. Tis ſweet, tis comfortable at the hour

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His great buſineſs was to ſave his ſoul, to make ſure of an happy Eternity, if he had been ſucceſsful in every thing elſe and had not ſecur'd his ſalvation, he would have done nothing; he was in danger of not doing it; and what would become of him if he had not? He trembles with fear at this thought, but having by the grace of God apply'd himſelfe chiefly to that great work, the ſame thought fills him with comfort.

Let us ſuppoſe that a man has taken a long journey about an important buſineſs on which his fortune, His honour, and his Life depends; that he comes juſt time enough to have audience of his Prince and to juſtify his conduct, and finds that if he had ſtaid an hour or two longer he would have come too late, have loſt his cauſe, and been condemn'd to Death. How glad is he that he did not triffle away his time upon the road? But if by his diligence he not only ſav'd his life,

but gain'd an Eſtate, honours, and dignitys, and became his Princes favourite, would he repine becauſe he had miſs'd ſome little pleaſures, & neglected ſome conveniences, which he might have found in the way if he had ſtay'd for them? And by ſtaying for which he knew ſeveral who came on the ſame buſineſs with him, had loſt their cauſe and their Lives? remembrance of paſt dangers gives us real pleaſure and we delight to talk of them, ſo the difficulties we have gone through for the love of God, will be very ſweet to us at the hour of Death. January & July.

Did it ever come into a mans thoughts on his death bed, to regret that he had not diverted and pleas'd himſelf enough in the world? We very often repent the having pleas'd our ſelves too much; we regret the time we have thrown away in vain & worldy diverſions, while we neglected mortification Alas! are not all our Lives full of nothing elſe but theſe very things of which we repent when come to dye?

Did ever Religious man at the

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hour of Death, repent his having willingly and meritoriously left his Relations, his wealth & the world which he must now leave whether he will or no, & gain nothing by his leaving it? an imperfect Religious will repent of his imperfections, but not of his being Religious.

The thoughts of Death terrify the stoutest, & make the wicked tremble, but they fill the Saints with joy. He is A good man says S. John Climacus that do's not fear Death, but he is a Saint who desires it. Then it is that those who have lov'd their Redeemer find a mighty sweetness in receiving the Viaticum, being able to say, come Lord Jesus my heart is ready.

Proficiscere anima Christiana de hoc mundo.

A crucifix must needs be welcome on a Death bed to a man, who has born the Cross all his Life and liv'd by it. With what pleasure do's he heat himselfe invited to leave the world which he values so little, and to take possession of the New Jerusalem after which he has sigh'd like a Prince recall'd to his throne:

like

like a valiant ſoldier whom his ſoveraign ſends for, to come and receive the reward of all his fatigues and combats. January & July.

Tis true the ſight of his ſins may juſtly make him fear, but the view of the Crucifix, the prayers of the Church, the aſſiſtance of the Saints, and eſpecially of the Queen of Saints, & of Jeſus-Chriſt himſelfe, inſpires him with confidence in the mercy of God, which no temptation or trouble is able to diſturb.

The ſight of his good works makes him confident but not vain, being perſuaded that the divine goodneſs who has guided him by his grace during this Life, will not leave him in this laſt hour, his tenderneſs & devotion to the Bleſſed Virgin, and the remembrance of her paſt favours will afford him no leſs joy and comfort. This fervent ſoul lov'd his Saviour and long'd to be with him, and now rejoyces in expectatien of that happy moment which will unite him to that dear Saviour for ever. What a ſweetneſs do's he find in pronouncing the name of Je-

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ſus, whom he lov'd with ſo much tenderneſs, & fervour?

What a difference is there between the death of a Saint and the death of a wicked man? a difference that is ſeen even after their Death. The Corps of the former inſpires veneration: not with ſtanding the natural horror we have for dead Bodys, and for every thing about them, ſo that we are not unwilling to come near them, neither the body of a Saint nor any thing about it frights us: we are not afraid to enter into the Chamber where it lyes, we are earneſt to get ſome thing that belong'd to it, we kiſs it, we ſtrive to touch it: his death is not only agreeable to him but to us to; ſuch is the power of Holineſs that it takes away all the horror of a Corps and renders it venerable, and precious. We are all charm'd with the Death of a Saint; Is it not then very ſtrange that our deſire to dye like him do's not excite us to live better.

We are all ready to ſay with the Prophet, Let me dye the death of the juſt and let my latter end be like

his : But to what purpoſe is this lazy wish while we will not imitate his Life ? Are we ignorant that the ſatisfaction which the Saints find in Death is the ordinary fruit of the holineſs of their Lives ? we should have liv'd like them, in a continual mortification of our paſſions, in an entire renouncing & contempt of the world, an uninterrupted practiſe of all Chriſtian virtues, and an exact performance of the duty's of our ſtation. January & July.

What is the reaſon that we take no more care to prepare for Death, ſeeing there is nothing of ſo great importance, that all depends upon dying well, and that if whe dye ill we can never repair our loſs ? oh ! 'tis a wretched thing to be reduc'd in in the laſt moment of our lives to unprofitable regrets.

Tho you were the greateſt admirer of the world, thou you were never ſo fond of it there is no more world for you when you are once dead. what do you carry away with you ? what reward do's the world give you for having been ſo long its ſlave ?

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what vexation, regret, and despair for having serv'd it? They are truly wise who leave the world first; who do not stay till it leaves them, but despise it, before it despises them.

Tis a sad spectacle to see a man carried out of a great house which he had newly built or purchas'd, & into which he never must return more. All his riches, his goods; and what ever he had in the world is now in the possession of another. Where are all those great men who made such a bustle in the world and appear'd in such splendor? They are gone, they are nothing now, and the world who considers men no longer than they are useful, thinks no more of them: they are in their graves, their flesh putrify'd, their bones calcin'd, their whole body turn'd into dust. How little do we think of those who liv'd before us, unless it be to blame their actions or publish their faults, And this is all the recompense we are to expect even from those whom we have most oblig'd. With what satisfaction would men dye, if they did

for God, but the hundred th part of what they do for the world to no purpose? January & July.

My God! what benefit shall I reap by these Reflections? what thoughts, what anguish shall I have upon a death bed if these considerations do not make me fruitfull? Am I so fully persuaded that there is no solid satisfaction but in thee? and shall I seek it any where else, thou onely canst make me happy both in Life and in Death?

The Saints were wise, hated themselves and kept their body's in subjection, never sparing them while they liv'd, why then do not I endeavour to be wise after their Example? They applaud themselves for having liv'd a mortify'd and holy Life in opposition to the maxims of the world. My God! what good will these pious reflections do me if I defer my Conversion any longer? I give thee hearty thanks for affording me this time to prepare for death, I know that I must begin by an holy Life, and Jam resolv'd to delay no longer, but begin this very moment.

OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

SECT. I.

OF THE NECESSITY OF preparing for Death.

ALL the world agrees that no thing is of so great concern as Death; that it is the most difficult thing in the world to dye well; that we can never recover our selves if we dye ill; yet there is hardly any thing for which men make so little preparation as for Death.

If we could dye twice our imprudence would not be so great, we might have some hope to repaire our fault, by expiating a wicked Life and an unprepar'd Death together. But we can dye but once, and we know that an Eternity of happiness or misery depends on that once.

We are not onely bound to live well (saith an Eminent servant of God) but much more to dye well, for the most pious Life will avail

nothing if it be not follow'd by an holy Death. Have we labour'd for Heaven? have we lead an holy Life? we are so much the more concern'd to dye holily that we may not lose the fruit of our pains. 'Tis true an happy death is the ordinary fruit of an holy Life, but 'tis no less true that if we dye ill we lose all the merit of the most Exact Life, and all those merits cannot secure us an happy Death.

Whence comes it then, that we take no more care to prepare for Death, then if were certain that we should never dye, or that we should dye well, or that we should dye more then once? whence is it that we act as if we could lose nothing by dying ill, or as if it were a very easy thing to dy well?

Can we be ignorant of the danger we run, of acquitting our selves ill of what we never try'd? especially when we don't know how to go about it? Can we be ignorant that it is the hardest thing in the world to dye well? that if we defert our preparation to a death bed, we put it off

to a time that is too uncertain for so great à work ? The work is long, the time is short, and very improper for a busineſs ſo extremely nice and delicate ; ſo that he who waits for this time ſtay's till he is a dying to prepare himſelfe for Death. We muſt therefore (adds that holy man) prepare our ſelves betimes ; We should begin this moment, leaſt if we delay any longer we begin too late ; or leaſt the time we shall have then, prove as moſt certainly it will, altogether unfit to prepare to dye in.

If a good Death conſiſted only in receiving the laſt Sacraments, in kiſſing a Crucifix, or shedding a few teares, our imprudence would be more tolerable, but how many with all imaginable helps have dy'd miſerably becauſe they never prepar'd for death ?

He who dyes well, dyes in the ſtate of grace, he dyes truly penitent, which he cannot do unleſs he hates ſin above all things in the world ; will it be eaſy for a man who has lov'd and doted on ſin all his Life and ſtays till death tears him by force from the oc-

taſſons of it, will it be eaſy for ſuch a man efficaciouſly to reſolve againſt it? will it be an eaſy thing for him to make ſincere acts of Contrition, of faith, of hope, and Charity, who was never us'd to them? when he is oppreſs'd with pain and ſickneſs, his ſoul troubled and diſorder'd at the approach of Death, will it be an eaſy thing for him to regulate his family and his Conſcience too at ſuch a time? to make a general Confeſſion which requires ſo much leiſure, & thereby repair all the faults of his paſt Confeſſions? Is ſuch a man who ſcarce knows what he do's, in a condition to diſpatch in two or three hours the moſt difficult work in the world which requires very much time, a perfect tranquility of mind and the greateſt application?

If we imagine it eaſy to dye well and with ſo little preparation, we muſt condemn the Saints who took ſo much pains, who ſpent Their whole lives in preparation, and yet after all were not free from a ſaving fear at their laſt hour. Nay we muſt condemn our ſelves for acknowled-

ging that they were truly wise in what they did. We own that we cannot be too well prepar'd for Death! O why then do we make so little preparation for it?

Our Redeemer forsaw our carelessness in this matter, and therefore he has exhorted us more to this preparation than to any thing else. *Watch* (says he) *for you know not the hour wherein your Lord will come; watch because you know neither the day nor the hour; Be alway's ready* and upon your guard. And to let us see more clearly that this preparation is a sure way to dye well, he adds, blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find watching, ready to run and open the door as soon as he knocks. This preparation is necessary for all those who desire an happy Death; and it seems that God the Sovereign dispenser of all Grace, has annex'd the Grace of dying well to the care we take in preparing for it.

Matt. 24. 42. Mar. 13. 35. Luke, 21. 35.

This we learn by the Parable of the Virgins; the Virgins who had been careful in feeding their Lamps,

and had prepar'd them ſelves before hand to meet the Bridegroom, went in with him to the wedding, from whence the foolish Virgins were excluded becauſe of their negligence &. want of preparation.

This truth, that we have need of preparation to dye well, is univerſally acknowledg'd: 'tis for this reaſon that we are ſo afraid of ſudden Death; But what do's this fear produce? Has it awaken'd and excited us to prepare for Death? Or do we wait for our laſt ſickneſs? that is ſtaying for Death, to prepare to dye.

The wiſe men of the world are not ſo negligent in their temporal concerns; do we our ſelves act in the ſame manner? do we undertake any thing of importance, wherein our intereſt, our honour, or our pleaſure is concerned without taking our meaſures before hand? we will not venture to ſpeak in publick or to shew our capacity till we have taken time to prepare our ſelves for it; and with what care and diligence do we im-

prove that time? If we are to shew our skill in any exercise we allwayes take some time for practise: what pains did they take (saith S. Paul) who strove for victory in the publick games? how carefully did they study all the slights necessary for their design? how did they foresee the artifices their adversary might make use of to surprise them? how did they avoid pleasure least it should enervate them? how temperate were they in their dyet? how great was their chastity for many years together? And shall we who know that our Salvation, that our Eternal happiness depends on the manner of our dying, be less solicitous to learn to do it well? we are then to engage in a terrible fight, dare we venture before we have learn'd to make use of our weapons & how to void being overcome? how can we hope for an happy death if we do not learn to dye well, if we do not so much as know what we are to learn?

How long shall we rely on our health, and youth, and on the facility of being assisted on our death

beds? do we know any thing more certainly then the uncertainty of that last hour! who would venture his Estate upon the hopes of a long Life? we may dye every moment, this for ought we know may be the last day we have to live; we see men dye every hour, and yet we deferr to prepare for Death, still we put it off to another time: Good God! what time do we mean?

The time of sickness is no time of preparation, we should be ready then. *Be ready*, says our Saviour, he do's not say prepare your selves, but be ready; now common sence will tell us that we must prepare before we can be ready. Estote parati. *Matt.* 24. 44.

What should we think of a Captain of a ship who never enquires whether his anchors and cables be in a readiness and fit for service, till he is just perishing in a violent storm? what should we think of a Governour who neglects to repair the breaches of his Town, and lets the magazines remain empty, till he is close besieg'd and the trenches opend? Death (says the wiseman) is a dangerous

voyage, we sail from time to Eternity among Rocks and tempests. It is a sudden siege, where our Enemy has shut us up in a moment; and can we think this a fit time to prepare our selves to fight?

We are afraid that the thoughts of Death will disturb our joy and make us sad; we deceive our selves, the thoughts of Death disquiet onely those who are unprepar'd and unwilling to think of it. After all our endeavours we shall never attain a solid happiness in this Life by any other means, then those which conduce to an happy death. He who has learn'd to dye well, (says a very holy man) has learn'd not only to live well but to be happy, for the thoughts of death are uneasy only to those who have cause to fear they shall dye ill, 'tis the truest subject of joy and consolation to him that knows how to dye well; he who is alwayes ready to dye, cannot be afraid to think of dying.

I could not avoid insisting on the necessity and manner of preparing for Death, because the chief design of this retreat ought to be to excite a

Christian to prepare to dye happily by living holily.

No practise of Devotion is more universally necessary then this; Every body cannot fast; Solitude and austerities are not equally proper for all sorts of men; but every age, rank, and condition is able to prepare for Death: nothing can be a reasonable hinderance. Let us then examine how we have been hitherto prepar'd? whether we do now prepare? And seeing we are now convinc'd of the necessity of doing it, how will our souls be rack'd with despair when we come to dye if we neglect it?

SECT. II.

OF THE MANNER HOW We must prepare to dye well.

1. THE most general and most necessary Preparation is an holy Life; when we begin that, we ought to begin to prepare for death the whole Life of a Christian being indeed a preparation to dye well.

We are afraid to dye suddenly, but what good will that fear do us if we put our selves under a kind of necessity to dye ill? for how can a man dye otherwise who will not prepare till he is just going to expire?

And indeed what probability is there that a man who has liv'd ill should dye well? that he should be able in two or three days to make reparation for the wickedness of a long Life? When the greatest Saints after a perfect Life of many years, have not yet been out of danger of dying ill. But we hope the we shall have time; what time? A time that is no time for us, a time of which we can make no use, a time when the time of mercy is past.

But we trust in the grace of God, and thus whe hazard all by supposing our selves sure of Grace, which God without any injustice might have refus'd to the most perfect Saints, and the son of God hath protested that they who deferr their confession to the last *shall dye in their sins*. And the Holy Gost hath declar'd by the pen of the wiseman,

In peccato vestro moriemini. Joh. 8. 21.

that when death ſeizes you which you put ſo farr from you now, *when diſtreſs and anguiſh which* you did not apprehend *come upon you* of a ſudden, *then he will laugh* at the ſinner he *will mock* at his miſery, *when he cry's* for mercy he *will not anſwer*, and will have no regard to his prayers.

In interitu veſtro ridebo & ſubſannabo vos. *Prov.* 1. 26. Clamabitis ad me & non exaudiam vos. *Pro.* 1. 28.

Tis true we ſeldom ſee any dye ill who have liv'd well, but 'tis much more rare to ſee any dye well who have liv'd ill.

2. A more particular manner of preparation, and which is moſt ſuitable for this day of Retreat, is to do all the Exerciſes of the Day as if it were the laſt Day of your Life, endeavouring to put your ſelfe into ſuch a diſpoſition as you would deſire to be in at the hour of Death.

To that end conſider ſeriouſly at the cloſe of each Meditation, what your thoughts on that ſubject would be if you were juſt going to give up an account to God of your whole Life. And particularly examine what it is that would moſt trouble you if you were now a dying.

Three things uſually diſturb dying

men. 1. Their neglect of the Duty's of their ſtation. 2. Their frequenting the Sacraments without profit. 3. Their abuſe of the meanes of perfection which they have enjoy'd, & their having, rendred uſeleſs the inſpirations and graces which they have receiv'd. We should examine ſtrictly this Day (eſpecially during the meditation on Death) whether we have nothing to reproach our ſelves on theſe heads; how we have hitherto diſcharg'd the duty's of our calling; whether we are punctual and careful now? If we are engag'd in the world, do we live in it like Chriſtians, according to our Saviours maxims? If we have the happineſs to be Religious, are we exact in keeping our vows and obſerving our Rule? If we have the honour to be Prieſts, do our Lives anſwer the holineſs of our Caracter? In what ever ſtation we are, have we done our duty in it? are we ſatisfy'd with our condition? And should we not be ſorry if we were going to dye, that we have made no greater progreſs in the way of Perfection?

Do not our frequent Confeſſions without any amendment, and our reiterated unprofitable Communions fly in our faces? Jeſus Chriſt hath fed us with his precious body and blood, do we grow ſtronger by that Divine food? what ſhould we anſwer to that impartial judge if we were now before him commanded to give an account of his blood? Do we ſay or hear Maſs with that piety & Devotion as becomes a Sacrifice which is the holyeſt act of our Religion? Would a Prieſt find comfort if he were now to dye in the Remembrance of the ſentiments with which he hath ſo often celebrated? And could he rejoyce before God in having frequently offer'd that adorable Sacrifice?

Have we not made an ill uſe of thoſe precious Graces which our Redeemer purchas'd for us with his Blood? how many inſpirations have we neglected? how many good deſires have we ſtifled? we muſt give an exact account of all theſe favours, are we ready to do it if we were to dye this moment? Are we able to

shew that we have improv'd our talents? We know it is not enough to keep them, can we shew that we have augmented them?

These should be the heads of our examination at the end of the Meditation on Death; we should make our Confession as if it were our last, and endeavour to repair what ever we have reason to fear has been amiss in our former. We should do well to make some reflections on the state of our affaires, and order them so as they may not disturb us when we come to dye. In short, we must endeavour to end the Day in such a state as we would desire to be in the last moment, and we must close up all with a sacrifice of our selves, our possessions, our healths, our Lives to Christ, begging him to dispose absolutely of them for the advancement of his Glory, and submitting our selves entirely and freely to Death when ever he pleases. We must then devote ourselves wholly to the Blessed Virgin, & beseech her to stand by us in this difficult time; we must address some prayers to S. Joseph, to

our Guardian Angels who are able to give us very powerful ſuccors, and ſumm up all our deſires with begging the grace of perſeverance in ſome particular prayer as we judge moſt proper:

3. A third Method is to ſet one Day a part every year to prepare for Death; to conſecrate it entirely to that work, and do that Day what we muſt do when we come to dye, what we ſhall then wish we had done, and what we ſhall not be able to do upon a Death Bed.

The Evening before we muſt put our affairs in ſuch order that we may meet with no interruption next day: for the work of the Day requires an abſolute Retreat and a perfect tranquillity of mind: if we have conveniency we ſhould begin with viſiting the holy Sacrament, beſeeching our our Redeemer by the merits of his Death to give us grace to diſpoſe our ſelves to dye well. Then we ſhould addreſs our ſelves in a particular manner to the *Bleſsed Virgin*, whoſe protection is ſo neceſsary in that laſt hour, *to Saint Michael, our good*

Angels, *S. Joseph* and the *Saint whose name we bear*; we should do well to say the *Vespers for the dead*, and so close our preparation for the next Day with half an hour of Meditation, on the improvement of Time, the meanes and Graces which God hath bestowed on us to work out our salvation, and the little pains we have taken for it.

Redde rationem villicationis tuæ. *Luke* 16. 2.

The *Parable* in the *sixteenth of S. Luke* is proper to be the subject of the Meditation, where the *Rich man* who was disatisfy'd with his *steward* requires him to *give an account* of his conduct since he took the charge of his affaires; or else we may choose the other *parable* of the *barren figtree* which is already propos'd for the evening before the Retreat.

Luke. 13. 6.

We are to spend the rest of the Evening in solitude, retir'd from the noise and distraction of the world, wholly employ'd in taking care of our salvation; in making a general Confession of our whole Lives, or of one or so many years as our Director thinks fit. And we must omit nothing that may serve to put our

ſouls into ſoo good a ſtate that we may have nothing to reproach our ſelves, no ſcrupules concerning our paſt Life; that we may be able to look on the next Day as the laſt of our Lives & to employ it as we would employ the laſt.

Let us begin the Day with bleſſing God who hath been pleas'd to give us yet longer time, and to inſpire us with the deſign of preparing for Death: And proſtrate before the Crucifix let us offer up our ſelves, our health, our goods, our Lives, an abſolute Sacrifice to God: ſubmitting our ſelves heartily to whatever kind of Death he thinks fit to ſend, & accepting it in ſatisfaction for our ſins & in union with the Death of Jeſus Chriſt.

Then let us meditate an hour on Death, on what we ſhall ſuffer, feel, and think then: let us endeavour to become ſenſible that it is not farr off; and to put on ſuch diſpoſitions as we ſhall have at its approach.

Let us reflect ſeriouſly on the rigour of Death, how without any

exception it deprives us of all things; on the condition of our bo dy's in the grave, and how ſoon we ſhall be forgotten in the world; how little our Relations, our Friends and acquaintance will think of us, as if we had never liv'd. Let us affect our ſelves with the vanity of all that charms us here, with the folly of placing our happineſs or our hopes on the Creatures: Riches, honors, pleaſures, all vaniſh & are as nothing at the ſight of Death; but above all let us preſs home the importance of dying well; the danger of dying ill if we do not prepare for it betimes, and that it will be to little purpoſe for us to put off our preparation to a Death-Bed.

This Meditation ſhould produce ſincere reſolutions that we will immediately begin to do what when Death comes we ſhall wiſh we had done ſooner, and what we ſhall not be able to do if we deferr it till then. And becauſe external objects very much contribute to render us more recollected, we may follow their Examples who make their Chambers

bers as obſcure as they can, who have the repreſentation of Death before them, leaving onely juſt light enough to diſcern it. Others ſuppoſe themſelves ready to expire and with a Crucifix in their hands ſeek all their conſolation from that amiable object. Others hang their Chamber with mourning and endeavour by the ſight of their winding sheets to repreſent Death approching. Theſe funeral objects have a certain mournful air which is capable of making agreat impreſſion.

Our Confeſſion muſt bu ſuch as we would make if we were dying; we muſt omitt nothing, we muſt diſguiſe nothing that may give us any trouble we muſt lay our ſouls entirely open, that our Confeſſor may be as well acquainted with our interior as we are our ſelves. We muſt shew him all that paſses in our hearts, all that God ſees there, and which he will one day expoſe to all the World if we do not prevent that terrible diſcovery by a full and entire Confeſſion. Hove all we muſt be truly contrite, which is the point wherein we are

oftenest deficient.

Say to your soul, that you are working for Eternity, tis not a Ceremony you are about; you are now to blot out all your past sins, to do this work in such a manner that you may be in no need of doing it again were you immediately to dye.

Examine your selfe carefully on these Articles; the restitution of your neigbours goods; the reparation of his honour blasted by your censures; the example you have given; the tepidity and slothfulness of your Life; your Enmity's and hatreds; your want of godly sorrow, of sincerity, and of resolutions of amendment in your Confessions; the sins of your youth; those which your interest hath made you commit; the ill habits in wich you have indulg'd your selfe; the dangerous engagements you would not break; the next occasions of sin which you would not avoid; the darling passion the beloved sin which men hardly ever mortify, & which is the source of all their disorders; your inordinate Lo-

ve of pleasure; your wilful ignorance of the duty's of your station; your abusive and scandalous railleries; the ill use of the Sacraments, of time, of Grace: If you be Religious search into the violation of your vows, your carelessness indischarging the particular duty's of your Calling.

These are the things which do generally disturb us on a Death-bed and make our Salvation doubtful; when restitution, reparation of honour to those we have aspers'd, when quitting the occasions of sin, reconciling our selves to our Ennemies precede our Confession, it is the best sign that our *sorrow* and resolutions are sincere.

We should look upon this days communion as the Viaticum, and imagine that we hear the Priest when he puts the blessed Host into our Mouths, says, *Receive Dear Brether the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ your Saviour, to be your viaticum* in your passage to Eternity. The Acts following the Communion must be suitable to the condition of a dying Christian, which we shall not

Accipe viaticum, Frater, corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi, &c.

be able to make when we are indeed expiring.

Having regulated our Consciences let us then put our temporal affairs in order, as if we were going to dye. *Make your Will* (saith *Saint Augustin*) *while you are yet in health, While you have your sences free, While you are Master of your Time, & of your selfe. In your last sickness* (continues the same Father) *you will be exposed to so many flatteries, importunities, and surprises, that it will, not be your Will, but the Will of those about you.* Besides, your time will then be too precious, and too short, to spend any of it in worldly matters: but you must be careful not to forget your selfe while you provide for others; you forget your selfe if you give nothing to the Poor.

Fac Testamentum tuũ dum sanus es, dum sapiens es, dum tuus es.

? In imitat blanditiis & minis duceris ubi tu non vis.

Let the remainder of the Day be employed in good works, in a profound solitude and recollection, and in reading some spiritual Book that treats of Death. *Father Colombiere's three discourses* on that subject are admirable, and may be very useful if we peruse them carefully: *Or else*

we may read the foregoing Meditation on the ſentiments which we ſhall have at the hour of Death.

Let us paſs one hour in conſideration on the duty's of our private ſtation, eſpecially on thoſe particulars which may trouble us on a Death bed; and we may reap great benefit by being attentive to the prayers of the Church for dying perſons, either in the adminiſtration of the Sacrament of extreme unction; or in the Recommendation of the ſoul to God.

It is evident that we ought to debarr our ſelves all manner of converſation during the whole Day; we muſt ſpeak only to our Director unleſs we viſit ſome poor ſick or dying perſon, not only to comfort and aſſiſt them but alſo to raiſe in our ſelves a more lively image of what we ſhall be one day.

We muſt cloſe the Day with a Meditation on Judgment; on the different conditions of a ferventand alukewarm ſoul going to appear befor God.

The chief fruits of this Chriſtian practiſe are theſe; we muſt be perfectly wean'd from every thing of

which we know Death will deprive us; to which we must add an exceeding horror of all mortal sin, Reformation of our Lives, and a sincere desire to lay up a treasure of merits by the practise of virtue and Good works.

SECT. III.

PRAYERS, AND Ejaculations to help us to dye well.

THE time of our last sickness is the most precious season of our Lives, wherein it concerns us most to improve every moment, and which we are least capable of improving. Both our body's and mends languish on a sick bed, and what we do is out of custom. We are not able to make long prayers nor affectionate meditations, but we may and must make frequent acts of Resignation, Love, contrition, and confidence in God; And how shall we do it, if we never practis'd them? To do them well we must have us'd our

selves to produce them: This consideration has induc'd me to set down some short prayers and fervent Ejaculation, taken for the most part out of scripture or the Holy Fathers, They are proper to assist us in dying well, and may be very useful to a Christian during his sickness if he were acquainted with the practise of them before.

Lord he whom thou lovest is sick.

Ecce quem amas infirmatur. *Joan. 11. 3.*

a *I am sick O my God, I come to thee my only Physitian; I am miserable and therefore I fly to thee who art the source of Mercy; I am dying and therefore I have recourse to thee who art Life its selfe. Yes my Dear Saviour, thou art my Physician, thou art the fountain of mercy, thou art the Life of my soul, pity my infirmity's.*

a Ægrotus sum, ad medicum clamo; miser sum, ad misericordiam propero; mortuus sum, ad vitam suspiro. Tu es medicus, tu es misericordia, tu es vita, Jesu Nazarene miserere mei. *Aug. Soliloq. cap. 2.*

b *Help O Lord my strength faileth me; my soul is over whelmed with trouble, and all my bones are broken with grief.*

b Miserere me, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum, sana me, Domine, quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea. *Psalm. 6. 3.*

O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thine Anger; be

Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me,

neque in ira tua corripias me. *Pſ.* 37.

Reminiſcere miſerationũ tuarum Domine. *Pſal.* 24. 6.

a Nunquid obliviſci poteſt infantem ſuum, ut non miſereatur Filio uteri ſui? & ſi illa obliviſcatur ſuum. *Iſai.* 49. 15.

b Tu noſti onus meum quale ſit Domine; da mihi illud patienter ferre, ut per viam crucis extollar ad te. *Aug. Med.* ca. 37.

Adauge laborem modò augeas patientiam. *Aug.*

Obſecro, Domine, fac miſericordiã tuã cũm ſervo tuo, dirige viam meã, ut cum ſalute revertar in domum Domini mei.

mindful O Lord of thy tender mercy's and pity me.

a *I am quite caſt down I ſuffer exceedingly but this is my comfort, that thou my God wilt not forget me in the midſt of my miſery; Can a mother forget her Child that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her Womb? yes ſhe may forget, but I have thy promiſe that thou wilt not forget me.*

b *Thou knoweſt O my God what I ſuffer; Oh! do thou give me patience that I may be able to go to thee by the Way of the Croſs.*

c *My ſufferings are great but not great enough; I deſerve much ſeverer chaſtiſements; give more croſſes, but at the ſame time give me more patience; ſhew thy mercy O Lord unto thy ſervant, direct my Way, that I may at length arrive at my Fathers Houſe.*

My God! if I had a thouſand Lives I would devote them all to thee; Oh! that the Life which thou haſt given me were more pure, and worthy thy acceptance: but ſuch as it is I give it thee without any repugnance; ſince thou requireſt it, I would not keep it tho it were in my power.

Yes my God! I am ready and willing to be depriv'd of every thing I lov'd upon the Earth: & to lay down this Body which I have lov'd too well.

I accept willingly the hideous ſtate to which I ſhall be ſoon reduc'd, when I become meat for the Worms, and am turn'd into rottenneſs. Oh! how happy ſhould I be if this deſtruction of my Body could repair the injury I have offered to the Divine Majeſty, by preferiug my body to him, and its ſatisfaction to his ſervice?

Not with ſtanding all my pains, I am ready to ſuffer greater if it be thy will O God; My moſt acute torments are too ſlight and ſhort, ſeing they are the laſt proof I ſhall ever give thee of my Love, and of my earneſt deſire to pleaſe thee.

Tho thou ſhouldſt condemn me to all the pains of the next Life, tho they ſhould be never ſo violent and ſhould endure to the end of the World, yet I would ſubmit to them. Glorify thy ſelfe O Lord inpunishing me; ſince I would not honour thee; nor do thy will.

I believe O Lord! all that thou haſt revealed to thy Church, and I firmly

hope for those glorious things which thou discoverest to thy Elect in Heaven.

I acknowledge O my God! the enormity of my sins; I have committed more then I am able to remember, my soul is grieved that I have served so good a Master, so ill. But all my sins cannot lessen my confidence in thy Mercy's which are infinitely greater then them all.

I trust that not with standing all my guilt thou wilt not suffer me to be for ever miserable, for thou art infinitely good. I am not afraid of Hell tho I have deserv'd it, becaust my saviour hath purchas'd Heaven for me. I hope in thy Mercy O Lord, and all the Devils in Hell shall never make me relinquish that hope. In spight of them I will sing eternal praises to thee, will adore thy mercy and possess and love thee for ever.

Magna mater, suscipe Filium cum tota æternitate luctantem. *Just. Lips.*

O Divine Mother, most holy Virgin, receive your unworthy child, who is now strugling and striving with Eternity, and succour him in this hour of danger.

Maria mater gratiæ, Mater mise-

Oh! Holy Mary, Mother of Gra-

ce and mercy, defend me from the assaults of the Enemy, assist and help me, now and in my last hour, and receive my soul into thy Arms.

Have mercy O Lord on this wretched sinner, thou who hast so often for given renewed offences, make him partaker thy mercy, now he repents of them.

a *I have sinn'd O God! I confess my iniquities, they are more numerous then the sand on the sea-shore but thy Mercies are never to be numbred.*

b *I repent O Lord my God of all my sins; My soul is torn with grief because I have displeas'd thee; and that which grieves me yet more is, that I do not grieve enough.*

c *My God! I curse the Day that I neglected to love thee; I curse the Day wherein I offended thee.*

d *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Protector of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

e *Though men should encamp against*

ricordiæ, Tu nos ab hoste protege, & horâ mortis suscipe.

Da misericordiam misero ac pœnitenti, qui tamdiu popercisti peccatori.

Bernard.

a Peccavi, Domine, peccavi & iniquitates meas agnosco; peccavi super arenam maris, sed misericordiæ tuæ etiam non est numerus.

In orat. Manass.

b Doleo, Domine Deus meus, doleo quod peccavi, & quia parum doleo, maximè doleo. *Aug.*

c Væ tempori illi, Domine, in quo non te amavi; væ tempori illi in quo te graviter offendi.

d Dominus illuminatio mea & salus mea, Dominus protector vitæ meæ, à quo trepidabo? *Psal.* 26.

e Etiamsi consistant adversum me castra non timebit cor meum. *Psal.* 26. 3.

Si ambulavero in medio umbræ mortis non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es. *Psal.* 22. 4.

me, my heart will not be terrifyed; though I walk in the midst of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil because thou art with me.

b Though thou slay me yet I will trust in thee.

c Mercy shall compass him about that hopeth in the Lord.

d Lord! increase my faith; increase my hope, increase my Love.

e My heart is ready O God! my heart is ready.

f Whether we live or dye we are the Lord's.

g It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight.

h We have received good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not also receive evil.

i We suffery justly O Lord because we have sinned against thee.

b Etiamsi occideris me, in te sperabo, Domine. *Job.* 13. 15.

c Sperantem in Domino misericordia circundabit. *Ps.* 31. 10.

d Adauge in me, Domine, fidem, adauge spē, adauge charitatem.

e Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum. *Ps.* 56. 8.

f Sive morimur, sive vivimus, Domini sumus. *Rom.* 14. 8.

g Dominus est, faciat quod bonum est in oculis suis. 3. *Reg.* 3. 18.

h Si bona suscepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustinebimus? *Job.* 2. 10.

i Justè patimur, Domine, quia peccavimus tibi. *Jer.* 14. 25.

FEBRUARY AND AUGUST.

FIRST MEDITATION.

Of the importance of salvation.

FIRST POINT. *The business of our salvation is the most important of all business.*

SECOND POINT. *The business of our salvation is our onely business.*

FIRST POINT

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Consider that no business is of so great importance to us as the business of our salvation; an Eternity of happiness or misery depends on the success of this. All other affaires are only permitted as they are subservient to this great Work: If we lose this, we lose all, for we lose God who is all good; & without whom there can be no good; if we fail in this, he is lost to us, and lost for ever without recovery.

Salvation is our own business,

February & August. every thing else is forreign to us; in other things we do the business of our Children, our Friends, our family, our Country, or of the Community to which we belong, and not precisely our own business: every thing else is a business of Time, this of Eternity.

If we lose other business tho of the highest importance we may find a remedy, or if we do not, we shall be no losers provided we succeed in this. The loss of our souls is the only irreparable loss, Eternity its self will not be sufficient to deplore it.

Shall we be able to comfort our selves with the thoughts that we have been successfull in all our other business of no consequence, and and have only neglected this, which is the only business of Eternity? 'Tis no matter tho we live obscurely and forgotten, without friends, or support, and dye poor, provided we secure our salvation. But what will all our Riches and power, all our knowledge and wisdom avail us, if we loose our souls? Tho all the world should conspire together,

they will never be able to deprive a man of Heaven & make him miserable to all Eternity: Neither will they be able to make one damn'd soul happy, so much as mitigate his Torments. What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul, or what can he give in exchange for his soul?

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Quid prodest homini si universum mundum lucretur, &c. *Luc 6. 25.*

Is it possible that this business of Eternity is the onely business of consequence we have to do, and that yet we should neglect this most, and lay it least to heart?

We fancy that our studies, our trade, our diversions, that our visits and conversation are of great importance to us, they take up all our time, we can never find leisure enough for them, we are unwilling to defert them; but when we should think seriously of our souls, we make no difficulty, of deferring, we imagine it is too soon, & that we shall have time enough, and yet (which is still more surprizing) we are never at leasure to set a bout it.

Certainly we must have odd notions of Eternal happiness, since we

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are so carless of securing it; would we be content to take no more pains, and spend no more time in our study's. and in temporal affaires, then we do in what concerns ous Eternal salvation?

If our salvation depended on a nother could he have so little zeal or charity, as to neglect it more then we do our selves? Tho we know it depends wholly on our own care. What pains do's every man take in his calling? If we have a child to provid for, if we have a design to joyn in partnership with a Merchant, how careful are we to inform our selves, to examine, to advise with our ffriends; what measures do we not observe; what precautions do we not take? we think we can never be too sure. But are we to spend a little time for salvation, we think a very little too much.

Salvation is the business of Eternity, but it must be done in time; & we have need of all our Time for it; God gives us our whole Life to think of it; he judged it was all little enough, but we imagine it

may be done inlefs. *February & August.*

If we ſpent in working out our ſalvation, the hundredth part of the Time and pains we throw a way in worldy buſineſs, we ſhould ſoon be great ſaints. This is the only neceſſary buſineſs we can have, and yet we hardly allot a little Time for it, nay we grudge it even that little.

By our proceedings one would think that we believe God our debtor, and oblig'd to us for beeing ſaved.

If a man of buſineſs or Letters, paſs one whole day in accquitting himſelfe of the duty's of a Chriſtian, he looks upon that day as loſt; But we ſpend whole months in vain ſtudys, or in wordly buſineſs, and call this ſpending the time well.

Salvation is our great and chief buſineſs; now a mans chief buſineſs takes up all his thoughts & hardly gives him time to think of any other; & if this ſucceds he comforts himſelfe for the miscarriage of the reſt.

We commonly put off the care of

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our salvation out to our last sickness, that is, we put of the business of Eternity, the most important business we have, and which requires all our Lives, to a time when we are incapable of following the slightest business in the world, when we are indeed incapable of any thing.

If God mistaken? who tells us this only is of consequence. Is he deceived in the disposition of his Providence, & in all his care which tends only to this? Is he in whom are all good things, and who is all himselfe, so little to be valued that we can be indifferent whether we lose him or no? Whence is all that weeping, that cruel despair of the damn'd souls, if what they have lost be not worth our seeking? If everlasting misery be so slight a business, why do we tremble at the thoughts of Eternity? And if we believe it so terrible, how can we be at rest while we are so careless about it, And in so much danger?

My God! how many day's of Grace have I abus'd? how many precious hours have I let pass unprofitably?

Wretch that I am to ſpend ſo much Time in doing nothing: But how much more wretched ſhall I be, if I do not now at length begin ſeriouſly to work out my ſalvation? *February & August.*

What do I ſtay for? For a proper time? Alas! that time perhaps is already paſt for me. Do I ſtay till thou calleſt me? Thou haſt never ceas'd to doit. Oh! how long haſt thou ſollicited me to no purpoſe? ſhall this reiterated Grace thou giveſt me now be in vain?

How long ſhall I ſpend the beſt part of my Life in vain amuſements which I my ſelfe condemn; And do I condemn them onely to aggravate my guilt, by loſing that time in the purſuit of them which I ought to employ for Heaven?

How long ſhall I fancy thoſe things neceſſary, which are of no uſe for the next Life? whill I neglect only the buſineſs of Eternity.

My God how great will my deſpair and confuſion be upon a Death Bed, if I continue to live as I have done hitherto? when all the meanes and opportunity's I have had of ſe-

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curing my salvation, when this pre-sent opportunity, and the thoughts I now have of doing it present themselves to my memory?

O my God since thou hast not yet punished me, tho I deserv'd punishment, I trust thou wilt not refuse me the assistance of thy Grace, tho I am unworthy of it. Since this is the day design'd for my conversion, the present resolution shall not be like the rest. I believe, I am fully persuaded, I am sensible that there is but one thing necessary, that Eternal salvation is the onely business that concerns me, and I am determin'd to begin this Day to apply my selfe seriously to it.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that our Eternal salvation is not only the greatest, but the only business we have, to which we ought to apply our selves entirely least we should do it ill. What ever else we call great business is not properly business, at least not ours, they concern others more then us, and we

labour more for our posterity then for our selves, *Februar. & August.*

We may get others to do them for us, and we may let them alone without being everlastingly unhappy, but we must work out our salvation our selves, and we are lost without recovery if we neglect it. This is that one thing of which our Saviour speaks so often, this is our only business: onely, because this alone is of such mighty consequence, the success were of of depends on us: Onely, because no other deserves our care; Onely, because it requires all our care, (and because we may do it if we will.)

'Tis equally the onely business of all the world, of the King in the Goverment of his Kingdom, of the Prelate in the administration of his Dioceſs, of the Learned in their study's, of the soldier in the Warr, of the Merchant in his Trade, of the Artisan in his calling. 'Tis not necessary for a man to be a King, a Prelat, a Soldier, a Merchant or a Tradesman, a scholar or aman of business, but 'tis absolutely necessary for him to be sav'd.

Porro unum est necessarium. *Luc.* 10. 42.

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In other matters we have always some resourse in this Life or in the next, but there is none in this; he who has not done this, has done nothing, and will never be in a condition to do it again: he who is damn'd, is damn'd for ever.

What reception would an Embassador deserve from his Master, who at his return from his Embassy, should give an account of the great things he had done during his absence, of the friends he had made, the reputation he had gain'd, the riches he had acquir'd & how well he had diverted himselfe, in fine that he had done every thing but the business he was sent to do?

God hath sent us into the world onely to work out our Salvation; this was his sole design in creating us, this is his sole design in preserving us; will he be satisfy'd with our telling him when we come to dye? Lord we have done great things, we have been in great repute in the world, we have got large Estates, we have, been instrumental in the salvation of our neighbours, we have neglected

nothing but our own ſavation; we have done every thing but that one thing for which thou haſt ſent us into the world. Ad yet this is all the account the greateſt part of mankind is able to give, becauſe 'tis at this rate the greateſt part of mankind live. And if we were now to appear before God, could we give any other account.

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Is all this true? is there ſuch an Eternity? is Life given us only to prepare for it? If I looſe my ſoul can I ever recover it? and ſhall I certainly loſe it, if I live as the greateſt part of the world do, and as I have done hitherto? ſhall I wish at my laſt hour that I had liv'd otherwiſe? that I had done what I could and what I ought to have done? And will all thoſe things that take me up now, ſeem vain and trifling then?

My God! do we indeed believe this our great buſineſs? the Devils and the damn'd have as good or ſtronger ſpeculative belief then we, but do we reduce our Faith to practiſe, which is the ſcience of the Saints.

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Is it possible that other mens business should take us up? that worldly things, recreations & compliments should have all our Time? while the business of our Salvation is the least minded as if it did not concern us?

What are we the better for being endued with Reason if we make no use of it in the business of our Salvation for which alone God bestow'd it on us? Alas we in a manner wear it out in prosecuting trivial designs, we are proud of it in matters of no moment; we value our selves upon our prudential conduct and wise Counsels in business; but we neglect the real use of it, and we act in the matters of Eternity as if we wanted common sence.

And (which is yet more surprizing) we are all agreed in the importance of Salvation, and in the vanity of every thingelse; yet we apply our selves onely to seek those vanity's, and are negligent in nothing butthe business of salvation.

We are all conceited of our wisdom and

and capacity in buſineſs; every man pretends to underſtand it, we think ignorance in buſineſs or neglect of it ſhows want of ſence & breeding; & that our reputation depends upon it; but if we neglect nothing but our Salvation, if we live as unconcernedly as if we had no ſoul to looſe, we are ſo farr from blushing or hiding our careleſsneſs, that we glory in it, and tho we are never ſo indevout and irregular we paſs for very honeſt men; and if we underſtand the world and know how to be ſucceſsful in it we are accounted wiſe. *February & August.*

'Tis an affront to tell a man that he do's not underſtand his buſineſs, but 'tis no diſgrace to be accus'd of negligence in the buſineſs of Salvation; ſurely we do not look upon it as our buſineſs; My God! when did this one thing neceſſary ceaſe to be ſo?

We can looſe our ſouls with all the tranquility in the world, and we are reaſonable Creatures in every thing that do's not concern us; we do not deny that the Saints were truly wiſe, yet all their wisdom conſiſted

February & August. in preferring their Salvation to every thing else; in esteeming it their onely business.

Are we wiser them they, that our actions are so contrary to theirs? they spent their whole lives in preparing for Eternity; to what end did they take so much pains & spend so much time, for what we pretend to do with so much ease? Miserable unthinking wretches that we are to allow so little Time for what requires it all.

Have we found a new way to heaven whereof the son of God was ignorant? or is the price of Heaven fallen? and is that happiness which cost the blood of Christ to purchase become of less value?

What are now the sentiments of those famous states men whom we esteem the greatest Politicians? of those extraordinary men who were alway's busy in pacifying or troubling the world, which their heads wer alwayes full of. Those men of Riches as the scripture calls them who liv'd without thinking on Eternity, and who after an uninterrupted success in

all their other buſineſs, have miſcarry'd only, in this great buſineſs of Salvation? They are not damn'd for lazineſs and ſloth, on the contrary they ow their ruine to too much uſeleſs buſineſs; they were ſo buſy that their very ſleeps were broken by their Cares, and they have loſt themſelves by labouring in what did not concern them, by taking too much pains about nothing while they neglected their onely real buſineſs, And 'tis by this that the greateſt part of mankind are loſt. *February & August.*

And ſhall not I increaſe the number of the loſt, if I continue to live as I have done? what have I done for Heaven? what have I not done to deprive my ſelfe of it? I have been careful of every thing but my ſoul, and I act as if its ruine were nothing to me. But I truſt in thy mercy O my God that the change of my Life ſhall manifeſt that my heart is chang'd; I will ſave my ſoul; the care of my Salvation requires all my diligence, and it ſhall have it all; I humbly beſeech thee to give me thy grace to recover what I have loſt, as

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thou haſt given me Time for it; I am ſenſible that this is my onely buſineſs, I am reſolv'd to do it, let thy Grace make me ſucceſsful.

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF THE MOTIVES which we have to apply our ſelves continually to the buſineſs of our Salvation.

FIRST POINT. *The Motives which are common to all Chriſtians.*

SECOND POINT. *The Motives which every one hath in particular.*

FIRST POINT.

Conſider what God has done for our Salvation: he is earneſt and deſirous to render us happy as if his own happineſs had depended on ours. Having made us free and maſters of our ſelves, what pains hath he taken, what pains doth he ſtill take to

gain our hearts? He desires our hearts, he sollicites us to give them, he is importunate with us for them; some times he promises, some times he threatens, he leaves nothing undone to persuade us to love him; he takes all this pains because he knows it is in our power to save or damn our selves, and he earnestly desires our Salvation. February & August.

Did we ever duly consider, are we able to comprehend the mistery of our Redemption? where the Almighty exerts all his omnipotence to shew the greatness of his Love to our souls, and with what earnestness he desires our salvation? Could we ever have imagin'd that God should become man to the end that men might be saved? Yet this he hath done, and not content with this wondrous miracle, he goes yet farther to engage us to love him; he passes a Life of three and thirty years in poverty and sufferings, and he subjects himselfe ro a cruel Death. Such a value doth God set upon our souls that nothing less than the sufferings, the blood, the Life of this God and man could

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redeem them; and shall we think it a small matter to loose them?

Shall we think that we do too much when God thought nothing too much to purchase our happiness? Let us rather conclude that we can never do enough. What does he get by our Salvation? yet what could he do more then he hath done? Is not all the profit ours? why then do we do so little for it?

How many are now raging and despairing for having neglected to do what I may do if I will? and which if I neglect now, I shall one day feel the same regret as they. Can we have a more powerful motive to excite us to set about it without delay and to pursue it continually?

Blessed be God we may yet work out our Salvation; we have yet time; God offers us his Grace; these very thoughts proceed from that Grace; but this may perhaps be the last moment wherein it will be offer'd us. Our Eternal happiness for ought we know, our Predestination may depend on this one important mo-

ment: I am certain that I may make my Salvation ſure at preſent if I turn ſincerely and heartily to God; I have at leaſt great reaſon to doubt that if I let ſlip this occaſion I ſhall never have a nother, and can I wilfully deferr one moment? February & August.

Shall the Devil take more pains to deſtroy our ſouls then we will take to preſerve them? ſhall he value our ſouls at an higher rate then we do our ſelves? The compariſon is ſhameful but too true: tho his nature be much nobler then ours, and his pride ſo great, yet he ſtoops to any thing that can ruine a ſoul: he never gives over, the greateſt reſiſtance never weary's him, or renders him leſs diligent in aſſaulting us; he cunningly makes uſe of every little occaſion to deſtroy us. Good God! muſt we learn of him how to prize our ſouls? and do we ſtand in need of his Example to excite us ſeriouſly to work out our Salvation?

Is not all that thou haſt done ſufficient? muſt we ſearch for new arguments to convince us of the worth

February. & August. of a soul for which thou hast paid so so great a price? Thou hast redeemed me o Divine Saviour, I am thine by a double title, and am resolv'd that nothing in the world shall hinder my giving my selfe wholly to thee without reserve.

SECOND POINT.

Consider how much Gods peculiar care of us obliges us to concurr with him to secure our Salvation; shall God himselfe act for us as if he had nothing else to do, as if he could not be happy without us? And shall we stand in need of a more powerful motive to excite us to diligence?

How do's his infinite wisdom improve every moment from our births to make us love him? How admirable is the conduct of his Providence in bringing about our Salvation? Do we count it a small Grace that we are born of Christian Parents when so many are born of Infidels. Is it a small Grace to be educated in the bosom of the Church out of which perhaps we should have still

continued if we had been bred in Error. How great a mercy was it to have a good instructor in my youth, a companon who set me a good example, a good Friend to advise me? We look on these things as common Accidents, but we shall one day see, that the hand of Providence dispos'd them all; We afflict our selves for the loss of a friend, for the death of a Relation, we are quite dejected with Poverty, our want of capacity disturbs us, and we are troubled to find our selves so little considered in the world, while perhaps these very things are the cause of our conversion, and we shall one day find that we owne our Salvation to these seeming misfortunes. *February & August.*

Most men have been in some dangers, or sick & perhaps to extremity; God who saw we should certainly be lost if we dyed then, being desirous to save us, hath given us more time: we have read some pious discourse only to pass away the time, and have found our hearts touch'd by it; how many happy occasion have we met with, which tho wholly un-

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foreseen, were very proper to promote Gods designs in our conversion? One inspiration, one sudden thought, one word spoken without design, is frequently the first occasion of great Conversions.

If we have the honour to be consecrated to the immediate service of God, let us call to mind all the circumstances of our vocation, and we shall find them so many miracles of Providence; that we should come to such a place, at such a time, and in such company; that when we thought our selves most wedded to the world we found our selves on a sudden weaned from it, that the numerous examples of worldings did not allure us, nor the love of our Friends retain us; that we were not discouraged by the austerity's of a life which appeard so terrible, but that we had resolution enough to surmount all these obstacles.

Nothing but grace could inspire this generous resolution to a person weary of the world, tir'd out with Crosse and terrify'd with the thoughts of approaching Death: but in

the heat of youth, when the world appears moſt charming, when we are moſt eager in the purſuit of pleaſures, when the hopes of a long Life and the proſpect of making a great fortune ſuggeſt other thoughts, what is a miracle if ſuch a converſion be not?

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But whence proceed theſe pious ſentiments at a time when I deſerve them ſo little? whence is it that among ſo many who would have been better then I, God hath inſpir'd me only with this thought? And if others have entertain'd the ſame ſincere deſires, & have had much greater merits, whence is it that they are not choſen? how comes it that if they were choſen they did not perſevere? that God perhaps hath ſuffer'd them to fall back that I might take their place?

Add to theſe diſtinguiſhing favours all the inſpirations and powerful aſſiſtances with which he prevents us daily, and if all theſe viſible proofs of his ſingular care of us do not prevail with us to love and ſerve him without any reſerve, we muſt be

February & August. certainly the most ungrateful wretches living, and deserve the severest and most immediate vengeance.

These are great subjects of meditation which require frequent and serious reflexions, they are the sensible effects of Gods particular Providence which continually watches over us. They are the visible marks of his singular Love in preferring us to so many others; and nothing is so capable of exciting in us a lively faith, a firm confidence, an invincible resolution, and ardent Love to him. And yet perhaps there are some who never thought of it.

My God! how do we employ our thoughts? How can we neglect these comfortable & important Truths? surely it would be impossible to delay setting about the great work of Salvation, if we did seriously reflect on what God hath done, and continues to do every day for us.

No wonder the Devil employs all his cunning to prevent our medita-

ting on these things; he knows how very proper they are to inspire a sincere desire of serving God; but we are inexcusable to pass so slightly over, and be so little affected with these pressing motives to endeavour after perfection in our several stations. *February & August.*

Let us examine whether we have faithfully concurr'd with the Grace of God, and whether we have comply'd with his designs in taking so much care of our Salvation; Let us examine wherein we have been negligent, and penetrated with this wonderful goodness of God who is so desirous to make us Saints, let us deferr no longer, let us immediately correspond with his will who seeks our good, and resolve on such measures as will make our Resolutions effectual. Then we shall reap the fruit of this meditation and of this Day's retreat, if we be careful to pursue our Resolutions, and not suffer them to be as so many have already been, without effect.

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS we shall have at the hour of Death.

SEE, THE *THIRD MEDITATION*, For the month of *January*.

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FIRST MEDITATION

OF THE SMALL NUMBER of thoſe that are ſaved.

FIRST POINT. *Our Faith teacheth us that but few ſhall be ſaved.*

SECOND POINT. *Our Reaſon convinces us that but few ſhall be ſaved.*

FIRST POINT.

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CONſider that the number of thoſe who ſhall be ſaved is very ſmall not only in compariſon of above two thirds of mankind who live in infidelity, but even in compariſon of that vaſt multitude who are loſt in the true Religion. There are few doctrines of our Faith more clearly reveal'd than this; Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate (ſaith our Saviour) for wide is the Gate and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction and

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And in another place he tells us that many are called but few are choſen even of thoſe that are called; which he repeats in the ſame terms on another occaſion: And the Apoſtle ſpeaking by the ſpirit of Chriſt compares the Body of Chriſtians to thoſe who run a race where many run but one onely gains the prize, to whom he likens thoſe that are ſaved; And to let us ſee that he ſpeaks of Beleevers he cites the example of the Iſraelites, you know my Brethren (ſay's he) that our Fathers were all under a cloud, & all paſſed through the Red ſea with Moſes, that they did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat: all theſe miracles were wrought onely for their ſafe paſſage to the promis'd Land, yet how few of them arriv'd in it? of eighteen hundred thouſand ſouls that came out of Egypt, none but Ioshuah and Caleb entred into Canaan.

Iſaiah compares the Elect to thoſe

few Olives that are left here and there upon the Trees after the gathering; and to that small number of grapes that remain after the diligent gleaning of the Vineyard. March & September.

Besides these examples and comparisons which the scripture uses to convince us of this terrible Truth, we have the examples of all the world: there was but one family preserv'd from the deluge; of five great city's onely four persons were saved from destruction, and we find but one sick man cur'd of the palsey among the crowd of Paralyticks that flock'd to the pool of Bethesda: This dreadful truth which our Lord repeated so often to his disciples gave occasion to that question, Lord are there few that shall be saved? To which our Saviour waving the Question least he should terrify them, answers, strive to enter in at the strait Gate.

This is certainly the most awakening and terrible Doctrine of our Religion, & yet how little are we affected with it?

Were I sure that but one of ten thousand should be damn'd, I ought

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to fear and tremble least it should be my case; but alas! among ten thousand perhaps there will hardly be one sav'd, and yet I am unconcern'd and and fear nothing. Is not my security a sufficient cause to fear? Do's it not proceed from the blindness and hardness of my heart? which renders me insensible of my danger, and thereby less capable of preventing or avoiding it.

The news of one ship lost among ten thousand affrights many, every one that has concerns at sea apprehends for himself; but though we know that the greatest part of mankind shall be lost, that very few will arrive at the Port of eternal happiness, how little are we sollicitous for our selves? and who has told us that we shall arrive there?

If Jesus-Christ had promis'd heaven to all Christians as positively as he has declared that his Elect are but few we could not be more unconcern'd then we are. But do's this security lessen our danger? And will this insensiblity render us less miserable? Alas! if we had no other, this very tran-

quility is a ſufficient cauſe to make us doubt of our Salvation. *March & September*

We don't think of it; what is it employs our thoughts if Eternity do's not? Do we believe it; can we believe it and not fear it? and how can we fear it without thinking of it?

How can we be unconcern'd at the ſight of ſo great a danger? the greateſt Saints were alwayes afraid; Saint Paul himſelfe was never exempt from this ſaving fear, yet we are free from it; for it is impoſſible to fear truly and not mend our Lives.

We Sacrifice our goods to preſerve our ſelves from ſhipwrack; a marchant makes no difficulty to throw his moſt precious wares the fruits of many yeares labour overbord, to ſave himſelfe; but we will rather hazard all than part with any thing to ſecure us from damnation.

If the infection be in the City every body is afraid; with what earneſtneſs do we ſeek preſervatives? with what care do we ſhun the beſt companys & condemn our ſelves to

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solitude? and all this because we are afraid to dye. Are we not afraid of being damnd? we believe that the greatest part of the world will be lost, and yet we are unwilling to spare one day for retreat, we will do nothing to make sure of Heaven.

Do we rely upon out vocation, upon the sanctity of our condition, upon the talents God hath given us, or upon the meanes of salvation which he affords us? Alas! remember Saul had a true vocation to the Kingdom, Judas to the dignity of an Apostle, yet Saul was rejected and Judas lost even in Christs family. Solomon the wisest of men hath with all his knowledge left us in doubt of his Salvation; and an infinite number of Christian Hero's who were exemplary for their Piety during the greatest part of their Lives, have fallen at last. Their too much security hath ruin'd them in the end of their Lives, and they are damn'd with all their pretended merits.

And yet O my God can I be without fear? This want of saving

fear should make me fear all things; I am certainly loſt if I be not afraid of being loſt, and can I fear any thing ſo much as eternal perdition? *March & September.*

O my Dear Saviour who haſt redeemed me with thy precious blood, and who art graciouſly pleas'd to make me ſenſible of my danger, ſuffer me not to be loſt for ever. My God! let me not be found among the Reprobates. I confeſs that I have hitherto walk'd in the broad way, but behold O Lord, I will now go into the narrow way and will ſtrive with all my might to enter into the ſtreight Gate.

Let others run in crowds to Hell, were there to be but one ſav'd in this place I am reſolv'd to be he; and I depend on thy grace; I know it is my own fault if I be not one of thy Elect. I have abus'd thy former graces but I have ground to hope that this ſhall be effectual: for I am reſolv'd let the number of the Elect be never ſo ſmall I will be one of that little flock whatever it coſt me; And I am perſuaded it is thy will as

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well as mine since I could not form this resolution if thou hadst not inspir'd it.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that if our Faith did not teach us this terrible truth our own Reason would convince us of it; we need onely reflect on what is requir'd of us, and on our manner of performing it, and we shall presently conclude that there will be but few saved.

If we would be saved we must live up to the Rules of the Gospel; are there many that observe them? we must profess our selves openly to be followers of Christ; is not the greatest part of mankind asham'd of that profession? if we would be sav'd we must either actually or in affection renounce the world and all we have in it, and bear our Saviours Cross daily.

The Pharisees had all the apperances of Piety, they were extreamly mortified, and their Lives were unblamable in the sight of men; and yet if our virtue be not more solid

and more perfect than theirs, we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *March & September*

'Tis a great matter to ſtiffle our revenge, it is yet greater to for give injury's, but this is not ſufficient to obtain Salvation; if we would be ſaved we muſt love even thoſe who perſecute us. It is not enough to abhorr all wicked actions, we muſt abhorr the leaſt ill thought; we are not onely oblig'd not to covet our neighbours goods, we muſt beſtow our own on thoſe who are in want. True humility which is the eſſential Caracter of a Chriſtian will not admit of ambition or vanity; Tho you labour never ſo much, if God be not indeed the end of your labour, you will have no thanks for your pains to all Eternity. Be as regular as you pleaſe, God is not content with an outward ſhew; he requires the heart and that you ſhould ſerve him in ſpirit and in Truth; that is ſincerely and uprightly. One mortal ſin effaces in a moment all the merits of the longeſt and beſt Life; and one hundred thouſand millions

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of years in Hell will not be a ſufficient punishment for the ſin of one moment?

It is an article of Faith that neither the proud, the covetous, the deceiver, the ſlanderer, nor the unchaſt ſhall ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; he that enters there muſt either have alwayes preſerv'd his Innocence, or recover'd it by a ſincere repentance; and do we find many who offer continual violence to their inclination, without which we can never come there? where is that exact purity? where is that continual penance? that hatred of ſin? and that ardent charity which is the caractere of the Elect? what is become of the Primitive ſimplicity? do's not intereſt govern? and is not Religion it ſelfe made ſubſervient to it? is not the General example the Rule of moſt mens actions? who look upon it as a maxime that we muſt act like men while we live among men; but we muſt act like Chriſtians if we will be ſaved: we muſt lead a Chriſtian life in the midſt of thoſe who have onely the name.

'Tis

'Tis likewise certain that the work of salvation is our greatest business; that we are sent into the world for this end alone; that we must employ our whole Lives in it, and that after all we cannot be sure of it; yet how few Christians do indeed make this their great & onely business? *March & September.*

We can never be sav'd without 'final Grace, 'tis an article of our Faith that we can never merit that Grace, that God might without injustice refuse it to the most perfect Saints; what reason then have we to expect it, who are so imperfect and so lukewarm in the service of God?

These are not counsels onely, they are the maximes of Jesus-Christ; the irrevocable Laws and indispensable conditions of salvation, which is not promis'd to the knowledge but to the observation of them; to so exact an observation, that the neglect of any one damns us to Eternity: Let us now call to mind at what a rate men live, and then judge whether many can be saved. Let

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us examine our ſelves and ſee whether we have any reaſon to hope to be of that little number.

Hear what S. Chryſoſtom ſays to the great City of Conſtantinople; how many (ſay's he) do you think will be ſav'd out of this vaſt City? (one of the greateſt & moſt populous in the world) I ſhall terrify you by my anſwer and yet I am bound to tell you that of ſo many thouſand inhabitants, there will hardly be one hundred ſaved, nay I doubt even of the ſalvation of theſe.

And yet this Imperial City was then as well regulated as any of thoſe wherein we live, full of thoſe we call honeſt men; its inhabitants were reputed devout, frequented the Sacraments, and liv'd as we generally do: Let this great Saints deciſion, who would never have ſpoken ſo poſitively without an extraordinary light, give us an Idea of the ſmal number of the Elect.

Is it poſſible that we can cheat our ſelves ſo groſsly as not to ſee that we are running headlong to

damnation? and that if we continue to live at our uſual rate, our Religion obliges us to believe we ſhall be damn'd? *March & September.*

And certainly we could not believe our Religion true, if after having laid down ſuch ſtrict Rules it allow'd us to hope to be ſav'd in the violation of them; this would be to impoſe upon the world: but bleſſed be God our Religion condemns moſt ſeverely ſuch an irregular conduct, and careleſs looſe Chriſtians will not be excuſ'd becauſe of their great number.

It is an Article of Faith that unleſs we be like our Redeemer we cannot be ſaved; to be like him we muſt conform our wills, we muſt hate what he hates, & love what he loves: Are there many who reſſemble this great pattern? how little do we our ſelves reſemble him? and what wil be come of us if we continue ſo unlike him?

Now adays men content themſelves with ſome outward appearances of Religion, with a ſhew of virtue; every man makes to him-

241. *March & September.* selfe a false systeme of Conscience, with which he rests satisfyed as to what concerns his Salvation; yet we believe that Heretiks are lost who have their system's too & who are as exact observers of the external part of Religion as we, and have very often all the quality's of meer honest men: what ground have we for this imaginary assurance? have we any new Revelation or particular Gospell? Do we build our hopes upon the profession of the true Faith which Heretiks have not? surely unless we take pleasure to deceive our selves we must own that he who believes little of what he ought to do, is in a much better condition, than the man who do's little or nothing of what he believes.

If believing were sufficient the number of the Predestinated would not be small, if we had liberty to live as we pleas'd we should make no difficulty of believing any thing; but Faith without works is dead; though you believe never so wel, you can never hope Salvation if you

neglect to practiſe what you believe. The Devils believe more than we, but their Faith is onely ſpeculative; and woe be to us if ours be no more than ſpeculative. *March & September.*

Are The ſublime Sanctity of our Holy Religion, the admirable example of the Son of God, the ſhedding of his blood, the efficacy of the Sacraments, the communications of his Grace, deſign'd onely to make us keep ſome meaſures, which ſerve onely to encourage us to ſin more boldly by diſguiſing thoſe faults which are common to us with the Pagans? Were the Saints men of another condition than we are? were they excepted in the univerſal Redemption of mankind? was not the way to Heaven diſcover'd in their Time? did they expect any other recompenſe? how comes it that we are ſo very unlike them? they reſolv'd to be Saints, what do we reſolve to be? And can we hope to be Saints without following their Example? what grounds have we to rely on the mercy of God, when we make uſe of that mercy to hin-

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der our Converſion? Jeſus-Chriſt has expreſsly condemn'd lukewarm ſouls, yet do's not this tepidity reign among Chriſtians?

Am I convinc'd that the number of the Elect is ſo ſmall? and ſhall I do nothing to be of that number? Yes, my God! were there to be but one ſoul ſaved, ſince it depends on my will to be that ſoul, I am reſolv'd to be ſav'd.

I acknowledge that I have done nothing for thy ſervice which can make me hope, but my confidence is founded on what thou art doing now for me.

Thy deſign in giving me this opportunity, & in exciting me to this reſolution, was not to increaſe my guilt: I have no need of any other Argument to convince me that thou deſireſt my Salvation than this very fear which thou haſt imprinted in my ſoul leaſt I ſhould not be of the number of thy choſen.

I have often rendred my beſt thoughts uſeleſs, but my God I have reaſon to hope that this reſo-

lution which I now make to work out my salvation with all the earnestness in the world shall be effectual. And because I have had too much experience that these pious designs are easyly forgotten, I will begin this moment to turn to thee, & to devote my selfe entirely to thy service, and I rely upon thy goodness for strength to persevere. *March & September.*

Dixi nunc cœpi, hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi. Ps. 76. 11.

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF SIN.

FIRST POINT. *Of Mortal Sin.*

SECOND POINT. *Of Venial Sin.*

FIRST POINT

Consider that all the calamity's and misery's that are in the world or have been since the Creation proceed from mortal sin: this is the cause of warrs, plagues and Famines, of the destruction of City's by fire, and of men by sickness: Eternal Damnation and Hell

March & September. it selfe are the dismall effects of one Mortal sin.

How can we comprehend the heinousness of mortall sin? seeing tho the Angels were the most perfect part of the Creation, neither the nobleness of their nature, nor all their perfections, nor their fitness to glorify their maker to all Eternity, nor their being particularly design'd for that end, could exempt them from being plung'd into everlasting flames, for one mortall sin of a moment express'd in a vain thought.

For one act of disobedience Adam was depriv'd of his original justice, of all his natural and supernatural gifts; by this one sin he lost the priviledge of immortality, became subject himselfe, and subjected his Posterity to those innumerable misery's under which we groan: so many thousand yeares are past, and the Divine vengeance is not yet appeas'd, nor will be till the end of Ages; 'tis the fire of this wrath that burns in Hell, and will never be extinguish'd.

The consideration of the terrible

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punishment inflicted on mortal sin is a clear proof that it is the greatest of evils, since God who is goodness its selfe, and whose mercy is exalted above all his works is so very severe against one act of it.

How many persons eminent for virtue full of merits and atrived to a great degree of sanctity, are now damn'd for one mortal sin?

If after three or fourscore years of penance after a long Life spent in the exercise of the most heroick virtues, after having wrought miracles; if we commit one mortall sin, all our penance, all our virtues will be counted for nothing, we become Enemys to God, and objects of his wrath & vengeance.

By the severity of the punishment we may conceive some Idea of the crime, but its enormity, and the hatred which God bears to it are more visible, in the pains he hath taken, and what it hath cost him to destroy it. Those inconcevable misterys of the incarnation, the nativity, the Life; the passion, and the Death of the Eternal Son were

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wrought onely for the destruction of sin: nothing less then all the blood of Christ could redeem one soul and after all this soul shall be damni'd for one mortal sin: all the flames of Hell, those Eternal flames could never cleanse the least sinful spot.

Can we believe this and live one moment in sin? and notwithstanding this extreme danger continue to sin and to expose our selves every day to the occasions of committing it? this is hardly to be imagin'd.

How shall we reconcile our Faith with our practise? how shall we make our practise and our Reason agree? we refuse no pains to oblige a friend, we are wonderfully exact in every punctilio of good breeding, but stupidly careless in the important duty's of a Christian Life. We own that most afflictions are the punishments of our sins; we are all afraid of Hell, yet we are not afraid of sin which is the cause of Hell; how sensible are we of the smallest loss? how uneasy, how sad? and

often uncapable of comfort? yet how insensible of the greatest? of that irreparable loss which a million of worlds can never repair: we sin but we are not sad, neither do we stand in need of comfort. March & September.

Thô we had committed but one mortal sin in all our Lives it would be a just reason for continual humiliation; it would be a just subject of fear and trembling to the last moment of our Lives. We have sin'd, we are in danger of renewing our sins, we are uncertain of their pardon, how can we be without fear?

Are we sure that we are in a state of Grace? or do we hope so, because of our reiterated confessions? Alas! who hath told us that our contrition was sincere? that our sorrow was from a supernatural motive? how can we be satisfy'd with our purposes and resolutions when we know by experience and by so many relapses how ineffectual they have often been?

Since God spared not the Angels that sin'd how ought we to tremble who have sin'd after the knowledge

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of their terrible punishment? After having seen the son of God expire on a Cross to destroy sin, can I imagine that God will hate sin less in me!

My God, & Sauiour! who hast dyed for me which thou wouldst not do for the fallen Angels; I humbly beseech thee by the merits of thy Death to give me that Grace which thou wouldst not offer them: Give me an hearty sorrow for all my sins, and incline my will to answer thy End in affording me this time for repentance which thou hast not given many others, and to begin immediately.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that venial Sins seem small onely to those who have little faith and less Love; they who love God truly look upon all sin with horror, and are more afraid of it than of the greatest misery. A venial sin is indeed a small sin, but it is not a small evil: as long as it is a sin it is a greater evil than a general desolation of the whole Uni-

verſe, and therefore the Saints of God have always judg'd yt all the creatures ought to think themſelves happy if they could prevent one venial ſin by the ſacrifice of their vety beings. *March & September.*

Moſes his diſtruſt in ſtriking the Rock twice coſt him his Life: Five and twenty thouſand Iſraelites dyed in one day at Berhshemeth for looking too curiouſly into the Ark of God: Davids vanity in numbring the people brought a terrible Plague upon them: two and forty children were devoured by wild Bears for mocking the Prophet Eliſha; and Hezekiahis oſtentation in ſhewing his treaſures to the Ambaſſadours of Babylon could not be expiated by leſs than the loſs of thoſe treaſures.

Thus God whoſe wiſdom is infinite punishes venial ſins in this Life; but in the next where his juſtice is not reſtrained by his mercy, the punishments of venial ſins yield in nothing as to their violence to the torments of Hell, and this he inflicts even on thoſe ſouls

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whom he loves tenderly and who love him above all things.

We shall find one Day that the Death of our beloved Child, the loss of such an estate, such a distemper, the ruine of such a family, and publick calamity's are perhaps now as formerly the punishments of venial Sins. God indeed doth not alway's send visible chatisements, but then he reserves the sinner for severer strokes.

For every venial sin we deliberately committ God withdraws some portion of his Grace, and is the deprivation of Grace a small loss? Veniall Sins do not indeed make God hate us, but they make him love us less; they make him stop the course of his bounty, withold his Graces, and suspend that particular Providence with which he watches over those he loves, & that tender care whereby he preserves them from danger, whereby he either keeps them from Temptations or enables them to overcome them: Venial Sins render a soul languishing and insensibly disgust it

with Piety, till they have brought it into a lukerwarm disposition, the most dangerous state a soul can be in. And God at length grows weary of our ingraritude, and cannot suffer that we should believe that we auquit our selves sufficiently of the infinite obligations we have to him, provided we abstain from offring him the most outragious affronts, thō at the same time we indulge our selves in displeasing him every hour. *March & September.*

Which of us would have the patience to keep a servant onely for his honesty, who had no other good quality, who did every thing with reluctancy and by halves, who treated us with disrepect and who never took care to please us, under pretense that it was in things of no consequence? And can we expect that God should suffer a servant whom we would not endure? It is true that venial Sins do not render us Enemy's to God; but it is as true that he who indulges himselfe deliberately in many venial Sins do's not love God.

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Certainly the man that contents himſelfe with barely not being Gods Enemy, eſteems his Love but little; the beſt that can be ſaid is that he is afraid to have God his Enemy; but very indifferent in deſiring him for his Friend. The wilful diſobliging a Friend upon all occaſions is a ſtrange method to make him love us: And I cannot ſee how we ſhall be able to reconcile our profeſſion of loving with our practiſe of wilfully diſpleaſing him.

'Tis no excuſe that we offend onely in little things, their ſmallneſs renders us inexcuſable, becauſe we might more eaſily avoid them. If they be little things we cannot pretend that we were diſcourag'd by difficulties, or that the violence of our paſſions hurry'd us away; it proceeds onely from an indifferency for God whom we ſerve out of fear, and flatter our ſelves that we love him becauſe we dread his juſtice.

No wonder then if God be as indifferent for us, if he abhorr our baſeneſs, if he withdraw his favours from ſuch unworthy wretches, and

refuſe to communicate him ſelfe any more to us. And indeed we can not expect thoſe peculiar favours which he beſtow's onely on fervent ſouls. Thus we run our ſelves into danger of comitting greater faults, for an habit of venial ſins is the high Road to mortall ones; and God is in a manner oblig'd to deprive us of thoſe divine lights, of thoſe ſtrengthning graces without which we can never reſiſt violent Temptations. Hence proceed the ſurpriſing falls of many who were at firſt ſo reſerv'd; they began by allowing themſelves little Liberty's, and ſo by degrees fell into ſuch diſorders as before this unfaithfulneſs they would have trembled to think of He who deſpiſes little things will moſt certeinly fall by degrees: For though venial ſins can never be come mortall yet they diſpoſe us for them: if we once content our ſelves with not loſing the Grace of God, we are ſure to looſe it in a very little Time: theſe terrible falls ſtartle us, but if we did wel conſider the diſpoſition in which venial

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Sins put the soul, we should be less surpris'd.

Venial Sins are like the beginnings of a sickness the first indisposition seems nothing at all, and we think it wil easily be cur'd, yet by little & little it undermines our health so that the least excess or unwholsome ayr throws us in to a malignant feavour and from thence in to the Grave.

Though sometimes men dye suddenly, yet their Deaths are usually preceded by some light indisposition which seem'd of no consequence. Thus Venial Sins thô never so deliberate and numerous, do not kill the soul but they weaken it, and impair its strength, so that it languishes and do's its duty's but by halves, and with reluctancy; every thing hurts it, Sacraments, Good works do it no good. How can a soul in this condition remain long in a state of Grace being thus expos'd to so many impending dangers, depriv'd of its support and strength, & every moment running its selfe further in to danger.

This made an Eminent Saint say that we ought ſome times to be more careful to avoid ſmall ſins than great ones: And 'tis the apprehenſion of not ſtopping here, 'tis the fear of being depriv'd of ſtrengthning grace in punishment of thoſe little infidelity's, & there by being left a prey to temptation, that makes the Saints ſo incapable of comfort after a veniai Sin. *March & September*

After all, is a Venial Sin nothing? is it of no conſequence? what then shal we count ſomething, if it be nothing to offend God? we think it a matter of conſequence not to diſoblige a friend, we think it a matter of conſequence not to be rude to any man ſo much as by miſtake and shall we think it a ſlight thing deliberately to diſpleaſe God? shall we think it nothing to leſſen his kindneſs to us? to ſtop the channel of his Graces? to diminish the fervour of charity & to render all the Sacraments of no uſe shall we think our ſelves affronted by a rash word, & shall we think that fault little which offends God?

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which draws his indifference on us thô not his hatred? which will make us looſe thoſe ineſtimable Treaſures that are worth more than all the riches in the world? shall we make nothing of diſpoſing our ſelves to fall in to mortal Sin, & of indulging our ſelves in thoſe irregularity's which are often the ginning of the Reprobation of many who appear'd eminent for Piety?

Conſider what are our thoughts of venial Sins? have we fully reſolv'd in all our confeſſions to mend them? for it is much to be feard that by frequent confeſſing the ſame venial Sins we too often render our confeſſions at beſt uſeleſs for want of contrition. Let us no longer look upon them as little things, there are but few things that we ought to fear ſo much; Let us examine our ſelves ſtrictly, & accordingly regulate our practiſe.

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS we shall have at the hour of Death.

SEE, THE *THIRD MEDITATION;* For the month of *January.*

FIRST MEDITATION

THAT WE OUGHT NOT to delay our Converſion.

FIRST POINT. *If we delay our Converſion, we thereby put our ſelves into an evident danger of being never converted.*

SECOND POINT. *If we delay our Converſion, we thereby put our our ſelves under a kind of neceſſity of being never converted.*

FIRST POINT.

CONſider that there is no Chriſtian who has not ſome time or other deſir'd to turn ſincerely to God; there are certain happy moments wherein by an inward light we diſcover on a ſudden ſo many faults in Creatures, we find ſo little ſolidity in every thing on the earth, and are ſo diſguſted with

what seem'd most charming, that we cannot avoid confessing that to neglect the service of God is the highest degree of madness. April & Octob.

Our Reason is convinc'd but our passions are too strong, and we have not resolution enough to oppose them; therefore self-Love finds an expedient to flatter both; it satisfy's our Reason by persuading us to resolve on Conversion, and pleases our sloth by engaging us to deferr it and to retain our former habits, but here it apparently deceives us for this delay puts us in to an evident danger of never being converted.

Time, Grace, and a willing mind are necessary to Conversion; if we put it off but for one day, how can we promise our selves that one day? if we have that Day, are we sure that we shall be more willing to improve it? And who hath told us that we shall then be assisted with amore efficacious grace than that which we have hitherto resisted?

Is any thing more uncertain than

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We think it is not now a fit Time to quit our dangerous conversations, to avoid the occasions of sin, to reform our Lives and to live more retir'd & more like Christians: alas! what time would we have? we are for staying till the heat of youth is past, till age and experience have disabus'd us as to those triffles which take us up now, and then every thing will contribute to our conversion.

Thus the greatest part of mankind argue about their projects of conversion, for no man pretends to dye unconverted; but do they reason well? do we find many of these Resolvers converted before they dye? We accept (saith S. Augustin) their pennance who deferr their conversion to the end of their Lives, but we make no great account of such conversions. No my Brethren (adds that great Saint) Idare

I dare not deceive you and therefore must declare that we make no great account of them. *April & Octob.*

We refuse to be converted now, what grounds have we to believe that we shall be more willing here after? If we find difficulties now, we shall meet with greater then they increase with our passions, which will then, be stronger, and instead of youthful amusements which take up our Time now, we shall then find that multitude of business will be a greater hindrance. Do not flatter your selves that you may be converted at any time; who has told you that you shall at all times be capable of conversion? If we refuse to be converted when God invites us now when our ill habits are but weak & few, can we reasonably expect to be able to do it here after, when they are multiply'd and grown inveterate? God will be weary of waiting; his sollicitations will diminish as our resistance of his Grace encreases; so that we are forc'd to own that we run the greatest hazard in the woild by delaying, and yet

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we are not a fraid to venture.

Was it ever heard that a condemne'd malefactor was unwilling to receive his pardon, & desir'd it might be deferr'd to another Time? God offers us his Friendship, he tenders his pardon to us, and we are unwilling to have it yet; we desire him to stay till we are in humour to receive it. He sollicites us and we bid him keep his Love for another Time; would we treat the last of men thus, and how should we resent this usage our selves?

Every man promises him selfe Time for Conversion if Jesus-Christ had promis'd us with an Oath that we should have notice of his coming, we could not live in greater security than we do, thô we know that he hath sworn the direct contrary.

Did ever any Merchand when he had found an opportunty of recovering all his losses put it off to another Time? and deferr the securing his fortune till the next day? Would not we think a man distracted who being dangerously sick should

desire his Physician not to visit him till five or six Day hence ? April & October.

Am not I with all my pretensions to wisdom this distracted man, when I delay my Conversion one Day ? I am out of favour with God, my soul is dangerously ill, the most efficacious remedy's do me no Good, my sickness encreases, God sollicites and beseeches me to be cur'd, he desires onely my consent, and I refuse his offer.

Has not the Son of God prevented all our excuses and all our false pretences by declaring that he will come when we are not aware of him ? this is not only the Counsell of a wise and knowing friend, it is the decision of the Lord of Life and Death who knows the time in which he designs to call us. Let our designs and projects be never so well laid, Death will come when we least expect it.

Did we ever see a man dye, were we ever dangeronsly ill our selves without resolviug to turn to God ? and yet we are still unconverted. Our last sickness will put

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us on the same resolutions, but how can we be sure they will be more sincere than the former, and why should we think that God will accept them?

Men tremble when they find themselves in danger of losing their Lives or Estates; is it nothing to loose our souls by remaining unconverted? If the loss of a soul be so small a matter why did Jesus-Christ do and suffer so much to redeem it?

My God! thou desirest not the Death of a sinner, thou desirest his Conversion; so that it is my own fault if I be not converted. Am I unwilling? and how can I pretend to be willing if I put it off from day to day?

One would think it were a great misfortune to be wholly thine, since men give themselves to the, as late as they can; I am terrifyed by other dangers, is not this of being lost for ever a much greater danger?

It is resolv'd O my God! it is resolv'd, I will deferr no longer; bnt thô I am willing; it is thou

alone that must convert me; Do it and then I shall be truly converted.

Converte nos & convertemur. *Thren.* 5. 21.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that by deferring our Conversion we are not onely in danger, but under a kind of necessity, of never being converted: when the Scripture exhorts us to seek God while he may be found, it teaches us there is a Time when he will not be found; what then must a man expect whom God hath sought in vain several yeares together and who has been insensible to all his Goodness?

Do we thinck our selves too young to be devout, and that we ought to stay till we are older, and then be converted? This is as much as to say that we have not sufficiently offended God, that when we have abus'd his goodness more and driven our ingratitude as farr as we can, we wil then begin to serve him. Will he accept of our service then? Tis true; God will

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never refuse a Sinner that is really converted, but the difficulty lyes in being converted; seeing we will not be converted now when God desires it, can we be sure of doing it when we shall have all the Reason in the world to doubt whether he continues to desire it.

Could the Apostles reasonably expect a second call from Christ to leave all and follow him, if they had delay'd till next day to obey the first? could they expect to have more courage next day? they who were *invited to the supper* in the Gospel were but twice invited and excus'd themselves but once upon very plausible pretences, which were yet sufficient to exclude them for ever from the Feast and to seal their Reprobation.

Luc. 14. 16.

The Difficulties and obstacles we meet with now, and which we pretend are already invincible will augment in number and force every day; we say we cannot be converted now, we shall be less able here after; the spiritual helps of reading and meditating on the great Truths

of the Goſpel, the Counſels of a wiſe Director, the frequentation of the Sacraments have no effect on us now: upon what then do we build our hopes of Converſion? we would not yield at firſt when we were touch'd with thoſe truths, much leſs shall we yield our ſelves when we are grown inſenſible. April & October.

We accuſtom our ſelves to every thing in time, the beſt advice and the moſt terrible Truths, will make no impreſſion on our affections and leſs on our hearts; like thoſe who are continually about dying people we shall by degrees looſe all ſence of what terrify'd us at firſt. By frequent ſlighting the thoughts of Hell, we shall become little afraid of it; Do we expect to be diſabus'd then? Alas! we are already convinc'd of our danger; for why do we intend to turn to God at laſt, if we be not perſuaded that we are in a dangerous ſtate?

Suppoſe a longer experience should make us ſee our Error, and wean us from the falſe pleaſure, & the falſe Liberty of the world, ſo that

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we ceaſe to eſteem them, we ſhall ſtill retain them out of cuſtom, intereſt, obſtinacy, or inclination. Though we glory no longer in being Libertins, in following the maximes of the world & in not being devout we ſhall inſenſibly continue ſo becauſe we are us'd to it; Unleſs we are abſolutely reſolv'd to be deceiv'd, we can not propoſe to our ſelves to overcome ſo many multiplied obſtacles all at once; when with a greater aſſiſtance of grace than we can expect, & with leſs guilt we have not courage to enough to conquer one ſingle Sin.

We perſuade our ſelves that at the hour of death, the ſence of approaching danger will make us turn to God; but how can we rely upon a Converſion to which we are excited onely by the preſence of Death, and which muſt therefore infallibly be the effect of Fear?

And for a clear proof that thoſe Converſions are ſeldom ſincere how many have we ſeen truly converted after a great Sickneſs? beſides it is

an Article of our Faith that the Son of man will come at an hour when he is leaſt expected, ſo that althô the Death of the greateſt part of mankind be not ſudden yet it is unforeseen: and Jeſus-Chriſt hath declar'd with an Oath that he will be inflexible to all the prayers of thoſe who expect their laſt hour to turn to him, ſo that we muſt either believe the Son of God miſtaken, or that he had a deſign to deceive us, or we muſt believe that the ſinner who deferrs his Repentance to a Death-bed will dye impenitent. April & October.

Our Saviour do's not Say that we shall continue obſtinate to the laſt, that we shall not beg him to forgive us, or that we shall not have Time, but I foretell you (ſaith he) that you shall dye as you have liv'd.

But we muſt all wayes hope; true but that is no Chriſtian hope which is contrary to our Faith.

The merits of our Redeemer might indeed ſave us, if his word

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and his Gospel had not already condemn'd us.

Can we imagine that the great work of Eternal Salvation which is the work of our whole Lives, and for which Christ himselfe judg'd no less time necessary, can be done in a few hours? that it can be done well in those last moments? After all this: can we believe that when we have delay'd it from one day to another, we may easily do it not withstanding we put our selves under a kind of necessity of not doing it at all?

Where Eternity is concern'd we ought to hope only on solid grounds; The only foundation of hope is the word of God, and yet we hope against this expres word.

How long hath God sollicited us to be converted? & yet how long do we continue to resist his grace?

If we had no other motives than the assurance that Grace is offer'd us, that God is ready to receive

us, that we may be this very moment if we will in the condition we shall wish for, when we come to dye the want of which will then drive us to deſpair; do we need any other to make us reſolve? April & October.

Would a damn'd ſoul delay one moment if he had any time, and the means of Converſion that I have? thoſe wretched Souls were once what I am, have not I reaſon to fear that I shall be one day what they are? they deferr'd their Converſion and are damn'd for it, am not I in danger of being damn'd for the ſame delay?

'Tis ſtrange that we can put off our Converſion to the laſt; that is, to do the moſt important and difficult work in the world: we wait for a ſeaſon wherein we shall be wholly uncapable of any thing; wherein a man would be thought mad or at leaſt imprudent that ſhould talk to us of buſineſs. Is a ſick or dying man in a condition to talk of buſineſs? And yet it is to this time which we our ſelves acknowledge

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to very unfit for the most trivial affaires, that we deferr the greatest business in the world, the business of Salvation, & of Eternity.

How can we think of being converted one day aud yet deferr it though but to the next day? The design of being converted implies that we believe our Souls in danger, that we are sensible of want of Love to God, that we do not serve him faithfully. That we are out of his favour, and that we dare not dye in the state in which we live. He who deferrs his Conversion wilfully lives in a continual danger, by which so many perish every Day, he refuses to love God, & is content to be out of favour with him: he resolves to live in à State wherein he is afraid to dye, and this after serious reflection, and after several designs to change his Life; he resolves to persist in enmity to God at the very time when God tenders him his Grace and presses him to accept his Friendship. Can any Christian, can any rational man make this reflection

& afterwards deferr his Converſion one moment. *April & October*

Alas my Dear Saviour! I am but too capable of doing this; theſe reflections and an hundred more will be to no purpoſe if thou doſt not convert me; Oh! do it for thy mercys ſake; as this is the day wherein I reſolve to be converted, ſo let it be the Day of my perfect Converſion.

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF THE GOOD USE of Time.

FIRST POINT. *That Time is very precious.*

SECOND POINT. *That the loſs of Time can never be repaired.*

FIRST POINT.

Conſider that nothing is ſo precious as Time every moment is worth an Eternity; that the glory of the Saints, the Eternal joys of

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heaven which Christ hath purchas'd for us by his blood are the reward of the good use we make of our Time.

Time is so precious that the smalleſt part of it is worth more than all the honours and Riches in the world, & tho we employ but one moment to get all those honours and Riches, if that be all we gain by it, God who judges righteously will look upon that moment as lost If a damn'd Soul were master all the Kingdoms of the Earth h: would give them all, and all its Treasures for one of those precious minutes which he formerly spent in folly and which we loose every Day.

Comprehend if you can what Grace and the possession of God is; this Grace, this God are the price of our Time, which is given us onely to obtain more grace and by its assistance to merit the enjoyment of God; and it is certain that by every moment we spend for any thing else, we loose more than the whole world can repay.

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The Saints in Heaven by reiterated perfect acts of vertue to Eternity can not merit a greater degree of Glory, yet this I can merit every moment if I will, by one true act of Love to God: Reprobates will not be able to satisfy the divine justice, nor to obtain the pardon of one sin by all their regrets and tears, nor by an Eternity of dreadful Sufferings, but I may do it every moment by one sigh or one tear; by one act of contrition I may appease the wrath of God.

Eternal happiness or misery will be the consequence of my use or abuse of Time; I can work out my Salvation onely while Time lasts; how then can men be so much at a loss how to employ their time? how can they amuse themselves and be taken up with trifles, only to passe away the time? You do not know how to spend the Time. Have you never offended God? are you not oblig'd to him? have you receiv'd no favours from him? Ought not you to adore and serve him? The glorio us Saints do not

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think Eternity too long to love, to praiſe, to bleſs, and honour him, and shall we think an hour of a day too long?

You dont know what to do; have you no ſins to grieve for? Dont you know that Jeſus-Chriſt is in perſon on the Altar where he expects to be ador'd & is ador'd but by few? and can you want employment for your time? we are never at a loſs, how to ſpend our time but when we have moſt time to ſerve and love God: For we can ſpend whole days in buſineſs and vain pleaſures, in offending God and deſtroying our Souls, with hout being uneaſy, or thinking the Time long.

Let us conſider that we can ſecure our Salvation only while Time laſts, and that all the time of our lives is given us only for this End, how careful ought we then to be of improving it? every moment is precious; we looſe all if we looſe our time.

But do we much value this loſs? Do we think that there is ſuch

a thing as the loſs of time? we improve every moment for things of no conſequence, we are caſt down at diſapointments, and with all our care and diligence we are continually afraid that we shall want Time. *Aprill & October.*

But alas! a Time wil come when we shall think otherwiſe, becauſe we shall have juſter thoughts; a time will come wherein we shall regret thoſe favorable days and hours which we miſpend now. A time will come when we would give all the world to recall ſome of thoſe precious moments which we now throw away and wilfully looſe; when we shall be torn with deſpair to find that they are all loſt, and that time is paſt.

Then you will cry out, Oh! that I were now in the condition I was in ſuch a Day of my Life; when I was meditating upon the improvement of Time: Oh! that I had now the ſame health and ſtrength; my God! what would I not do? but wretch that I am, I

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foreſaw this deſpair which tor-
ments me now for having loſt
my Time; why did I make no
uſe of that foreſight, nor of that
Time?

Time is ſhort, it ends with our Lives; wee have already paſs'd the greateſt part of them, and to what purpoſe? what uſe have I made of this laſt year? how much time have I loſt in doing what I ought not, or in omitting what I ought to have done? and how little of it have I ſpent in doing my duty? My God! what a terrible account have I to give of my Time & of theſe preſent Reflections?

How can I expect mercy from God if I make no better uſe of what is left? if I deferr my Converſion any longer? how many are dead who were in better health than I ſome months ago? how many ſeem now in their full vigour who will be in the grave before the year is paſt? and how do I know that I ſhall not be one of them?

Let us then work while we have time, we cannot expect it

should be long, and therefore let us not deferr our Converſion one moment. *April & October*

SECOND POINT.

Conſider that you can never repair the loſs of Time, that all you can do will never recall one moment, and if you be capable of reflection and be ſeriously deſirous of Salvation, this will be ſufficient to convince you of the importance of redeeming time.

It is certain that all the moments of our Lives are counted, let us employ them well or ill, we shall not increaſe their number, for it is fix'd and leſſens continually. An hour ago we had ſo much more time to work out our Salvation, an hour hence we shall have ſo much leſs.

Tho we live holily after the example of Saint Paul and do not looſe one moment of what is left; yet it is moſt certain that a moment once gone will return no more, and that if it be employed ill 'tis loſt. If we employ the reſt of

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our time well we may escape the dangers into which our abuse of the past has brought us, but we cannot undo what we have done; we have still lost so many precious hours and with them all the graces which God would have bestowed on us, & all the good we might have done in them.

My God! what a loss is this? so many moments lost since we had first the use of reason, and with them so many graces beyond recovery.

When we spend hours and days in vanity we call it passing the Time, a phrase very unfit for a Christians mouth: we pass a way, the time, Time it self passes away, the Time so pass'd is lost, and neither it nor the graces we could have merited in it will return any more.

The Grace of Predestination is in some manner annex'd to some certain moments, what will become of us if God has fix'd ours to some of those moments that are past & lost! The fear of having lost it is indeed a sure and sensible mark

that I am not yet deprived of it, but what must I expect if I let slip this opportunity, and do not grow better by this fear? April & October.

We know time is precious and short, and yet we complain it passes slowly, we are continually wishing for some time to come; whence proceeds this uneasiness? are we weary of living? no; but we make ill use of our Time, and that loss which we see and feel disturbs our quiet and makes us think the time long: All our pleasures and diversions cannot free us from this uneasiness, which never quits those who loose their Time. But they who improve it well for their Salvation are not subject to this uneasiness, nothing is so easy so full of peace as they. Many Saints have with Saint Paul desired to be deliver'd from their Exile that they might perfectly enjoy their God and be out of danger of losing him, but we never find that they were uneasy in the discharge of their duty's in doing the will of God. So true it is that to be entirely satisfy'd and

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contented we need onely make a good use of time by yielding obedience to the Divine Will.

But here let us examine what use we have made of our Time; its pass'd, & if it be lost too, how great is our loss? how shall we repair it? If we had improv'd those many moments, hours, and days as a Christian ought to do we should now reap the fruit in spirituall consolations; instead of which we feel nothing but regrett for having lost so much time, and terrible apprehensions for the exact account we must give of it.

Let us therefore at least make good use of what is left, for the period of our Life is fix'd and we draw nearer it every moment, a time will come when we can improve Time no longer because it will be follow'd by Eternity. Let us for the future improve the little that remains and not loose one single moment.

Quia tempus non erit amplius. *Apoc. 10. 6.*

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS we shall have at the hour of Death.

SEE, THE *THIRD MEDITATION*, For the month of *January*.

FIRST MEDITATION

OF THE WILLINGNESS of most Christians and the insincerity of their desires to be saved.

FIRST POINT. *He who sincerely desires to be saved, must make use of the meanes.*

SECOND POINT. *It is not enough to make use of some meant, but we must make use of all the necessary means of Salvation.*

FIRST POINT.

CONsider that altho every man pretends to be willing to be saved, yet there are but very few truly willing. The most hardned Sinner will sometimes tell you that he intends to be converted, the most unfaithfull Religious believes himself

himſelf deſirous of perfection, be- *May & November.*
cauſe no man is ſo mad or ſo much his own Enemy as to be fond of ruine, and we know that without Converſion we are ruin'd for ever.

But if we ſtop there and content our ſelves with ſaying we deſire it, without making uſe of the means, we have indeed the thought of Converſion but not the will. If we conſult either our faith or Reaſon the torments of Hell will make us afraid, and the great Truths of our Religion will ſtartle us: but we deceive our ſelves if we take this for Converſion, tis onely a conviction that we ought to be converted.

A good natural diſpoſition or Education may inſpire us with an admiration of virtue and an horror of vice, but the underſtanding has a greater ſhare in theſe Sentiments than the will, and it is much to be feared that ſuch an averſion to Sin is onely an hatred of its diſmall conſequences, and ſuch a love of Piety is no more than an agrea-

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ble Idea of the happineſs that attends it, without any efficacious deſire of Salvation.

Let us not deceive our ſelves we we ſhall not be judg'd according to the good thoughts we have entertain'd, but according to the good works we have done: Hell is full of ſouls who were as willing to be ſaved as the greateſt part of Chriſtians are, and can we content our ſelves with no better a will than theirs?

We do not deſign to be damn'd; there is not one Soul in Hell that ever deſign'd it: but like a frantick ſick man who ſays he would fain be well yet will not take any thing to make him ſo, who ſatisfy's himſelfe with thinking on the benefits of health but will make uſe of no means to be cur'd; ſo we deſire to be ſav'd, but we will not make uſe of the means of Salvation. Can any man in his wits imagine that this is the way to Heaven? and what truth would there be in our Religion if it were?

Can we fancy that a faint de-

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ſire is ſufficient to ſave us with out uſe of means? all the damn'd Souls have had that deſire? Can we entertain a thought ſo injurious to the wiſdom of Jeſus-Chriſt, and ſo unworthy of our holy Faith? Chriſt will not have the moſt labourious carefull Chriſtians believe themſelves out of danger and ſure of their reward, tho they have neglect'd none of the means of Salvation, tho they have liv'd in a conſtant practiſe of all virtues: and ſhall we think we make our Salvation ſure while we do nothing for it, while we are ſo plung'd in the Love and purſuit of the world that we hardly remember that we are Chriſtians? If we can once believe that we may be ſaved without the uſe of means, we muſt believe that Chriſt had a deſign to impoſe upon us, in giving us ſuch Laws; we muſt look on all the Saints as men who had loſt their Reaſon, for why ſhould they think it impoſſible to be ſav'd without living up to the ſtrictneſs of the Goſpell, if none be damn'd but thoſe who ma-

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liciously and in cold blood resolve to be so.

One would think it impossible for any Christian to entertain so palpable an error, for who can expect to attain an end without using the means? yet how many are there who say they would be saved, that will not use the means? How many Religious think their whole work done when they have left the world? But *Saint Paul* did not think his Salvation sure tho he had left all for Christ, tho he had labour'd and suffer'd so much for his service, and therefore he tells us that *he chastis'd his body and brought it into subjection, least after having preach'd to others, he himself should be come a cast away.*

Castigo corpus meum & in servitutem redigo, ne forte cum aliis prædicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar. 1. Cor. 9. 27.

We are engag'd in an unlawful design, we retain our neighbours goods unjustly, we nourish hatred and malice in our hearts; and though we are thus slaves to our passions, though we do not know how to offer the least violence to our inclinations, because the speculation of the blessedness and glory of the

just in Heaven makes us conclude that it is good to be there, shall we take this for a sincere desire to be saved? surely we must renounce our Reason if we do. *May & November.*

How many do we see every day toyling and labouring for pleasure and gain, their hearts entirely taken up with them and all their thoughts employ'd about making their fortune with so much application, that they scarce think of their being Christians; who because a solemn Holiday or some unusual accident revives the impressions of Religion which they had receiv'd in their Child-hood and makes them spare a few moments for some confus'd reflections on those great Truths: because the apprehensions of eternal misery makes them tremble for a while, tho they go no farther, but immediately return with more eagerness to their disorders; tho the first object effaces those impressions, tho they themselves seek to forget them that they may not be disturb'd in their indifference and carelessness

May & November. of Salvation, yet fancy that they are very desirous to be saved. Alas! thy are no otherwise desirous of it, than, the damn'd in hell were before them.

SECOND POINT.

Consider that men are seldom so unreasonable as to expect to be sav'd without making use of means; but they pick and choose, they will make use of some but not of all; they will use those means that please them best, not those that are most proper for attaining their End.

Like the sick man of whom S. Ignatius speaks, who chooses his Physick, not by the Doctors advice but his own Palat; refuses those prescriptions which are proper for his distemper, and takes onely such as please his tast, can we think that such a man is efficaciously desirous to be cur'd?

Is that desire of Salvation with which we please our selves, more sincere? We rarely meet with men who resolve to observe neitver com-

mands nor counſels: we would be ſaved, and we are willing to uſe ſome means, provided we may chooſe them: Among ſo many commands as Chriſt has given us, 'tis impoſſible that we ſhould have an averſion for all, we chooſe only thoſe that pleaſe us, tho the reſt be never ſo neceſſary. Enormous ſins fright us, but the reſervedneſs ſo neceſſary to preſerve our innocence do's not agree with us; we are ready to give our ſelves to God, if we may have leave to retain our favourite paſſion. *May & November.*

If we find no difficulty in faſting we are eaſily convinc'd that we cannot obtain Heaven without it: but becauſe we find it leſs eaſy to mortify our paſſions, to pardon injurys, & to obſerve a ſerious recollection; we think it ſufficient to faſt, and that we may diſpenſe with the reſt, without danger.

Hence proceeds that monſtrous mixture of virtues and vices in the ſame perſons who make profeſſion of Holineſs, to the prejudice of true and real virtue: hence it pro-

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ceeds that we ſee ſo little amendment; we truſt to thoſe virtues which we think we have, and take no notice of the greateſt part of our faults.

We do indeed make uſe of ſome means but not of all, and thoſe we chooſe are generally the moſt improper to attain our End we do not examine whether they be the beſt, but whether they be the eaſieſt, the moſt ſuitable to our inclinations, and which pleaſe us moſt. We are ready to quit this occaſion of debauchery, but we will not break off an accquaintance or renounce an employment tho it be a continual Source of Sin.

Some are willing to give alms, but they are unwilling to enquire if they have nothing that belongs to another, for fear of being oblig'd to reſtitution; ſome are willing to make reſtitution but they will not think of pardoning an injury; others are inclin'd to forgive, but they will not Sacrifice a criminal or dangerous friendship to the care of their Salvation: A Religious

man is resolv'd never to return into the world, but the takes little pains to perfect himself in his Station; he trembles at the thought of breaking his Vows, but he slights the observation of his Rule, tho the keeping of his vows generally depends on the strict observation of it. *May & November.*

These men have indeed some Reason to think that they are unwilling to be damn'd; but it is certain that they do not really desire to be saved; 'tis evident that they desire it onely by halves, their desire is not sincere by seeming to do some thing for Salvation they think themselves secure, while by not doing all that is requir'd of them they render their peril much greater.

Can that man be in earnest who says he desires to be sav'd, and yet refuses to make use of all the means? when a sick man refuses to take all necessary remedy's, have not we reason to tell him, surely you have a mind to dye? this is just the case of most men who say

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they would be saved, yet will not use all necessary means; may we not very well make them the same reproach, surely you have a mind to be damn'd?

Where is our sincerity? Where is our Truth? can we impose upon our selves so farr as to think that we sincerely desire to save our souls at the same time that we neglect them so strangely? While we are so earnest and diligent when we desire to succeed in any worldly business.

What a difference is there between a man following his business or his study, and the same man working out his Salvation? Were we as earnest for heaven as we are for honours and Riches, we should soon be great Saints; for we cannot be rich if we will, but we may be be Saints if we will.

We are not contented to make use of all necessary means to obtain our temporal ends, we employ even those that are not necessary, and we justify all this care and pains by saying that we would not have

any neglect to reproach our ſelves; do we obſerve this maxim in the buſineſs of our ſoul? ſhall we have nothing to reproach our ſelves on a Death bed? May & November

If we do not deſign to be ſaved why do we make uſe of any means? if we de deſign it, why do we not make uſe of all? is it not becauſe ſome are more difficult than others? but to what purpoſe do we practiſe onely thoſe that are eaſy, ſince they are all neceſſary? Are we ignorant that he who do's not do all he ought to be ſaved, is no more advanc'd than of he had done nothing?

Do we think ſome few and doubtful means ſufficient in a buſineſs of conſequence? And would we venture its ſucceſs upon ſuch means as common experience has fouud very improper for a buſineſs of that nature? certainly the buſineſs of Salvation is a buſineſs of conſequence.

Jeſus-Chriſt hath declar'd that he will have all or nothing, that he will accept no divided heart,

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there is no medium, they who are not absolutely for him, are against him. Yet notwithstanding we all know this, lukewarmness & tepidity, this divided heart is the caracter of most Christians at this day.

Thus we live; but did any of the Saints sanctify himselfe by such a Life? Do not we our selves doubt of the Salvation of those who dye in such a State? What shall we think of our condition if we don't take other measures after all these Reflections? can we reasonably expect to be saved?

And that which makes our danger yet more visible, is that our Lives are a manifest contradiction to our Faith; and yet we do not mind it: we are convinc'd that it is necessary to Salvation to believe the mistery of the Trinity, and of the Eucharist, notwithstanding all the difficulties that sence & reason suggest, because God hath reveal'd them: but hath not the same God declared that he who will be saved must abhorr the maxims of the

world, that he muſt bear the croſs daily, ad muſt make uſe of thoſe very means which I neglect? we durſt not pretend a deſire of Salvation if we refus'd to believe the leaſt tittle of what Chriſt requires us to believe in order to be ſaved, how then can I pretend that I deſire to be ſaved if I practiſe onely ſome part of the means which he hath clearly told were abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. *May & No. enter!*

But our Religion is too ſincere not to condemn this contradiction between our Faith and manners; it teaches us that God requires all or nothing, & ſurely he deſerves very little if he do's not deſerve all: it would be better for us to give him none, than not to give him all: ſuch a diviſion is exceeding injurious to him; for in fine, we carry our ſelves thus only to thoſe whom we neither reſpect nor fear; God abhorrs this conduct, he hates tepidity more than coldneſs, and therefore cannot endure to be ſerv'd by halves.

Abſolute perfection is not neceſ-

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ſary, but our Saviour commands every one efficaciouſly to ſeek perfection in his ſtation; do not object that the number of theſe men of good will is ſo very ſmall. that if this be true there will be but few ſaved; who can doubt of it after what Chriſt hath told us of the ſmall number of the Elect? Do we ſee many who *love God with all their hearts?* how can we pretend that we are ſinceeely deſirous of Salvation while we do not obſeve this firſt and great Commandment? while we make uſe onely of ſome meanes and neglect the reſt & while we ſatisfy, our ſelves with ſome pretended good works of our own chooſing, and indulge our ſelves in our belov'd paſſion which is a continual Source of Sin.

I ſee now my God that I have not been truly willing; that I have hitherto deceiv'd my ſelfe with a falſe deſire, which hath kept me in ignorance of the greatneſs of my danger; but I am now reſolv'd ſincerly to be ſaved at anyrate; And I have ſome grounds to be-

lieve that I am truly willing; but it is thy grace my Dear Saviour that must render my desire efficacious, I hope for it through thy mercy; I am convinc'd of the necessity of using all the means, this conviction hath dispos'd me to do whatever thou commandest; command now whatever thou pleasest I will make no difficulty, I will obey without any reserve.

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Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum. *Ps. 56. 9.*

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF LVKEWARMNESS

FIRST POINT. *There is no state more dangerous than a Lukewarm state.*

SECOND POINT. *It is harder to recover out of a Lukewarm state, than from any other.*

FIRST POINT

CONsider that by a lukewarm State is meant a certain disposition of the Soul, in which it

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contents its ſelfe with avoiding heinous ſins, but takes little care to avoid ſmall faults: it is negligent in ſpiritual duty's, its prayers are diſtracted, its confeſſions without amendment, its communions without fervour and without fruit, it is unfaithful to the divine grace and ſins without fear or remorſe.

Such a ſoul grows indifferent to the greateſt virtues, and ſoon after diſguſted with them: its affections languish in the ſervice of God, ſo that the yoak of Chriſt ſeems heavy & inſupportable; its thoughts are diſtracted & ſo very little taken up with God or its ſelfe that it ſuffers them to rove after every object: it dares not retire in to its ſelfe becau'e it can find no peace there: In this condition it makes no ſcruple of expoſing its ſelfe to the occaſions of Sin, if it do's any good 'tis only by fits if it performs any duty's 'tis only out of cuſtom: and provided is keeps ſome meaſures and avoids the reproaches of thoſe of whom it ſtand in awe it is not

at all ſollicitous to pleaſe God, whom it offends almoſt by every action. *May & November.*

It makes no difficulty of committing all ſorts of venial Sins with deliberation, it performs with reluctancy and uneaſineſs thoſe devotions which it cannot avoid: it entertains an averſion for pious Chriſtians becauſe their vertue is an uneaſy reproach to it: it takes pleaſures onely in the imperfect, becauſe their actions countenance its careleſſneſs

Hence proceed thoſe pernicious friendſhips to which ſo many pretended Friends ow their ruine, thoſe inſipid rallerys on Chriſtian exactneſs whereby they ſtiffle the ſmall remainders of their fervour; they are no ſooner in this wreched ſtate of Lukewarmneſs but they frame to themſelves a falſe Conſcience, under the ſhelter of which they frequent the Sacrements and do ſome good wocks, yet ſtill indulge themſelves in ſecret averſions, in envious jealouſies, in criminal and

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dangerous engagements, in uneasineſs & murmuring againſt their Superiors, in ſelfe Love and in pride which influence almoſt all their actions, and in an hundred other faults of the ſame nature in the midſt of which they live unconcern'd, they perſuade themſelves that there is no great crime in all this, and ſeek for excuſes to palliate thoſe faults which God condemns as heinous ſins, and which they themſelves will condemn as ſuch when they come to dye, for then their paſſions will be no longer able to hinder them from ſeeing things as they are in themſelves; ſurely it is no hard matter to diſcover that the Salvation of a man in ſuch a ſtate as this, is in great danger.

The State of a Soul in mortal ſin is very dangerous, but our Saviour judges a lukewarm ſtate to be yet worſe, for he tells the Angel or Bishop of the Church of Laodicea, I would 'thou wert either cold or hot for becauſe thou art lukewarm and neither col nor hot,

I will caſt thee out of my mouth as tainted & offenſive. *May & November.*

Do's Jeſus-Chriſt who bears with the greateſt Sinners, who is alwayes ready to pardon them, who did not abhorr even Judas himſelfe; do's he abhorr a lukewarm Soul? hath he who is ſo tender towards Sinners, no tenderneſs, no love, for a Soul that is neither cold nor hot? What hopes then can ſuch a Soul have of being ſaved?

We ought not to deſpair of the Salvation of the moſt notorious Sinner; though his diſorders and crimes have rendered his Converſion difficult we ought ſtill to hope, for he knows his Sins & is therefore more capable of being made ſenſible of them and of hating them. Tell the greateſt Sinner of the ſevere judgments of God, of Death, and of the rigour and duration of Eternal Torments; the force of theſe terrible verity's may alarm and convert him: but all this makes no impreſſion on a lukewarm Soul; his condition is without remedy; becauſe it abſtains from

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crying and ſcandalous Sins which ſtartle a Soul that hath any fear left, 'it do's not mind Spiritual and interior faults, it mingles them with ſome actions of Piety, ſo that they eaſily paſs unregarded by a Conſcience that is not exceeding tender, and thus not knowing the greatneſs of its danger it do's nothing to prevent it.

Nothing do's a Soul Good in this condition; Prayers, exhortations, reading, maſſes, meditations, Sacrements, are all fructleſs: whether it be that the little benefit it hath hithertho receiv'd by them gives it a diſguſt, and takes away its deſire to make uſe of them; or that being accuſtom'd to them they have leſs effect; that having heard theſe terrible truths diſcours'd of an hundred times, and having as often diſcours'd of them its ſelfe to no purpoſe, they make no impreſſion on it.

It receives but few graces becauſe of its unfaithfulneſs in thoſe which it do's receive; its faults are alwayes great becauſe they are at-

tended with an higher contempt, a greater malice & a blacker ingratitude than the faults of others: this odious mixture of good and bad which compoſes the caracter of a lukewdarm Soul diſcovers clearly how injurious ſuch a conduct is to God: the ſeeming good works that it do's are a convincing proof that it hath not forgotten God, but its careleſs and imperfect way of doing them ſhews how little it ſtands in awe of that God whom it ſerves with ſo much indifference and diſguſt: And indeed this diſguſt is mutual, it has an averſion to Chriſt and Chriſt hath an averſion to it; no wonder that ſuch men immediately after their communions are ready to return again to and renew their Sins as if they had not receiv'd; the Opinion of their pretended good works tenders them proof againſt all wholeſome advice; they can hear it with all the coldneſs in the world, and 'tis this that makes ſo many good thoughts and holy inſpirattons uſeleſs.

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Hence proceeds the ſtrange blindneſs of a lukewarm Soul, and that horrible inſenſibility which is the heavieſt of judgments, and the utmoſt degree of miſery: And therefore S. Bernard and S. Bonaventre declare that it is much eaſier to convert a worldling tho never ſo wicked than a Lukewarm Religious.

What hope is left for ſuch a Soul? there is no remedy for it; it will not be cur'd, becauſe it is not ſenſible of its illneſs: It is a ſick Creature whoſe condition is the more deſperate becauſe it laughs at thoſe who think its ſick; ſo that there is need of a greater miracle to convert a lukewarm Soul, than to make the blind to ſee or to raiſe the dead to Life.

None but thou my God canſt do it, thou art able to cure the moſt inveterate diſeaſes; but thou hateſt Lukewarmneſs, and this makes me fear; I cannot pray with that confidence as I would for the moſt ſcandalous ſinner; I acknowledge that I have been hither to in

a lukewarm State. But since thou hast made me sensible of it, I am perswaded thou desirest to draw me out of it. Oh! let not this renewed grace which perhaps will be last thou wilt ever Offer me, be ineffectual: thou wouldst have me be saved, I am resolv'd to be saved, what then can hinder my Salvation? *May & November.*

SECOND POINT.

Consider that a lukewarm state is not only very dangerous, but which is more strange it is almost impossible to recover a Soul out of it because he that would recover must be sensible of his being in danger, which a tepid Soul is not.

An heinous Sinner easily knows his danger; there are certain favourable moments where in by the help of grace he discovers so much deformity in his Soul that he presently laments his misery, which knowledge and confession render his conversion much less difficult.

Bnt a lukewarm soul do's not believe that ke is lukewarm; he

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that believes himſelfe tepid ceaſes to be ſo, for we are rarely ſenſible of our condition till we begin to be fervent: this renders the converſion of the lukewarm almoſt impoſſible, for which way ſhall one go about to perſuade them that they are in ſuch a State? Blindneſs is the firſt effect of Tepidity.

Its unfaithfulneſs being gradual it is leſs ſenſible of them, then its faults grow habitual, and at laſt it takes pleaſures in them: nothing toucheth it when it is in this condition, and it ſuſpectes nothing: it is not ſenſible of any new fault; it grows lukewarm without omitting one of its devotions; 'tis the imperfections of theſe very devotions that give birth to its tepidity, and help it to deceive its ſelfe by covering its reall faults with a falſe appearance of vertue.

God himſelfe who ſo loudly alarms the Sinner is now ſilent and will not awake him; but leaves him to dye in this mortal Lethargy: I will begin ſays he to caſt thee out, he do's not do it all at once,

once he throws him off by degrees that he may not see it: the unhappy Soul is rejected and his reprobation sealed, and he do's not perceive it, nor is he in the least sensible of his wretched condition. *May & November.*

And what hope can he have to be cur'd? how is it possible for him to recover out of this dismall state? The advice of his true Friends, the pious counselli of his wise director, and of his zealous Superior, and the best examples, are all ill received: by his insensibility and hardness of heart he seems to be enchanted, all his actions bear the visible marks of certain reprobation, and that God hath left him.

Saint Bonaventure observes that it is no extraordinary thing to see notorious sinners quit their sins and become truly penitent, but that it is very extraordinary to see a lukewarm Soul recover. And to this we may apply the words of *S. Paul* in that terrible passage at which all those who grow cold after having been fervent in the service of God

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should tremble; *it is impossible* (that is extremely difficult) *for them who were once enlightned and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost* preferably to many others, and of the sweetneess of a Spiritual Life, and of saving Truths, *if they fall away*, if they grow weary of serving God and return to their Sins, *it is impossible to renew them again unto Repentance.*

But my God what is all this to a lukewarm Soul unless by a miracle of mercy thou art pleas'd to open his eyes and to make him see his dangers? he do's not suspect himselfe of being fallen away, nor will he suspect it till thou discover it to him by an inward light; and what will it avail him to be convinced of it, unlesse thou giveſt an extraordinary supply of grace to recover him from that wreched State?

Let us now examine if we have no reason to fear? The Lukewarm are exceeding curious, they will try all Sorts of devotions, and therefore may possibly read this medita-

tion but let them not deceive themselves, this day of retreat may be profitable if we examine impartially and diligently whether this dangerous tepidity do's not influence all our actions, whether the Sacraments are usefull to us, and whether we grow daily less imperfect by the Exercises of Virtue. *May & November.*

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS We shall have at the hour of Death.

SEE, THE *THIRD MEDITATION,* For the month of *January.*

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FIRST MEDITATION
OF HELL.

FIRST POINT. *The damn'd in Hell ſuffer all the torments that can poſſibly be ſuffer'd.*

SECOND POINT. *The Damn'd ſuffer to Eternity.*

FIRST POINT.

Conſider ther is an Hell, that is a place of torments prepar'd for thoſe Souls who dye in their Sins; we are ſo us'd to hear of Hell that we are very little affected with the thoughts of it; but if we were truly ſenſible what Hell is, we ſhould never think of it without more & more horrour.

Imagine that you ſee in the center of the Earth a vaſt and bottomleſs lake of fire and flames, the

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damn'd plung'd and rowling in it; all cover'd and transperc'd with fire, which they ſuck in with their breath, and which enters at their eyes and ears; their mouths and noſtrils caſting forth dreadful flames; their skin ſcorch'd, their flesh, blood, humours, and brains boyling and bubling up with the violence of the burning, their bones and marrow all on fire like a piece of iron taken red hott out of the furnace, all the parts of their body on fire and the fire in every part of it.

How glad would theſe wretches be to ſuffer only from our fire, notwithſtanding the horrour of being thrown into a burning gulph, but alas! there is no comparaiſon between it and the fire of Hell: my God! what tourments! Ours is lightſome, theirs dark; Ours is an effect of the goodneſs and bounty of God, theirs is the product of his incens'd Omnipotence, and of the infinite hatred he bears to Sin: tis a fire which the Almighly do's all he can to render furious &

raging; and alas! it is not their onely torment, this fire makes them feel at the same time all sorts of pains. *June & December.*

Represent to your selfe a man tormented with the gout or a violent colique; what pains do's he feel? how do's he cry out? how willingly would he dye to put an end' to his torture? and yet he suffers onely in one part of his body, he hath the Liberty of complaining & the satisfaction of seeing himselfe pityed; what would it be if every member suffer'd the same torment? if instead of helping him the stinders by abus'd him without suffering him to complain?

In hell, the damn'd do not onely suffer the pains to which we are subject in this Life, they suffer all these and infinitely more, their torments are universal, violent, complicated, and all excessive, in one instant they feel them all, and in the midst of all they cannot receive or so much as hope for any ease, what would one drop of water be against a whole Sea of flames?

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And yet that poor refreshment, that nothing is deny'd them.

The ſick find ſome eaſe in tumbling and removing from one place to another, but the damn'd shall be eternally in the fire, unmovable as a rock.

Yet all theſe dreadful torments are nothing to their deſpair when they look back on the time that is loſt, and the ill uſe they have made of it. The thoughts of the damn'd will be employ'd to all Eternity in calling to mind the vanity of thoſe objects which made them forget God. I have plung'd my ſelfe into this abyſs of darkneſs and everlaſting flames for the love of a trifling pleaſure, of an imaginary honour; which I could poſſeſs but a moment, and of which I have ſcarce any Idea left: where are now all thoſe fantomes of glory greatneſs, and reputation, which took up all my Time, and made me forget Eternity? Where is that fortune to which I ſacrific'd my all? Where are all thoſe whom I lov'd ſo well? Where are thoſe of

whose vain opinion, censures, and power I stood so much in awe? Yet these I preferr'd to the favour & love of God and for these I have lost my Soul. *June & December.*

The opportunitys of Salvation which he hath abus'd and the reward that he hath lost, will take up the thoughts of a damn'd soul to all Eternity: How easyly might I have confess'd such a Sin? God offer'd me his Love, he gave me warning, he press'd and sollicited me so long, & gave me so many years of health since my fall; I pass'd for a wise man in the world: Oh! how came I to deferr my conversion to the hour of Death? How often have I trembled at the thought of my danger, at the apprehension of damnation? And yet am damn'd at last: I needed onely have done those good worke which such a friend, such a companion, such a Relation, have done; I began well, it would have cost me little to persevere, and if it had cost me never so much, could

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I take too much pains to avoid damnation?

Add to these inconcevable torments, to these cruel regrets, the the irreconciliable loss of the supreme Good; the sence of a God irritated to Eternity, of a God lost without recovery, lost for ever, this is the height and perfection of their misery; they never cease to be the Victims of the Divine wrath and vengeance: we must know what God is before we can be able to conceive what it is to loose him without hope: tho we are so little affected with it now, they who have lost him have other thoughts. How insupportable will be the remembrance that I had a Redeemer, but I slighted the price by which I was redeemed? that my *Saviour* lov'd me to such a degree, and that it is impossible for me to love him, that I am hated by him, and that he will never have any compassion on my misery.

O! my Dear Saviour! who hast

ſuffer'd ſo much ſo recall me, who haſt bought me with ſo great a price that I might not be loſt; thou will take pleaſure to ſee me plung'd into this fiery gulph: thou will heap everlaſting miſery on me without mercy, thou wilt be no longer my Father, nor my Saviour: no wonder if Hell be a place of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, of deſpair and woe, ſince the Almighty who made the world by one act of his will, do's all he can, ſeems to exert all his power & force to make a wretched Creature ſuffer. *Fund & December.*

There is an Hell, and yet there are Sinners; Chriſtians believe there is an Hell, and yet this hell is full of Chriſtians.

There is an Hell; and at this very moment an infinite number of miſerable Souls are tormented in it: 'tis certain that many of thoſe with whom we converſe, that many of thoſe who read this, and who meditate on the torments of Hell, will one day be caſt into thoſe everlaſting flames.

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And am not I like to be one of them? Divine Saviour! thou haſt not bought me to deſtroy me: but haſt not thou alſo ſhed thy blood for thoſe that are loſt? This makes me fear and tremble; but what good will this fear do me if I looſe my Soul? Oh! my good Maſter! I wil be ſav'd what ever it coſt me; I humbly beſeech thee by thy precious blood ſuffer me not to be damn'd; what will it advance thy glory to ſhut me up for ever in that abyſs of fire and flames? *They who do go down to Hell do not praiſe thy name*, they do not love thee there: if thou ſuffereſt me to fall into Hell it will only augment the number of thoſe who hate and blaſpheme thee. My God! I will be ſav'd, tho all the reſt of the world were loſt; thou wouldſt have me be ſav'd, I truſt in thy mercy, and hope that thou will place me among thy Elect.

Non mortui laudabunt te neque omnes qui deſcendunt in infernum. *Pſalm.* 113. 17.

SECOND POINT.

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Consider that the torments of Hell are nor onely universall, excessive, and dreadfull, they are Eternal too; notwithstanding all their horror, there is no hope that they can either end or diminish.

What must be the thoughts of a damn'd Soul when after infinite millions of years she casts her eyes from that abyss of Eternity, upon the short moment of her Life and can hardly find it after that vast number of ages which are past since she came there? Life tho consider'd never so near appears but a moment; the time past of it, seems but an instant to us who live, and when we come to dye tho we have liv'd long we can hardly persuade our selves that there hath been any interval between the day of our births, and the prefent Day: all that is past seems a Dream; what then will it be after Death? when so many millions of years are over, when our descendants for many generations

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are all forgotten; when time has ruin'd our houſes, deſtroy'd the Citys, and overturn'd the Kingdoms wherein we liv'd: when the end of Ages ſhall have bury'd the whole Univerſe in its own ashes, and infinite millions of Ages after?

This is dreadful, but all this is not Eternity; when a damn'd ſoul ſhall have ſuffered all theis while, and an hunded thouſand times as much, 'tis nothing to Eternity.

Were one of the damn'd oblidg'd to fill the hollow of a mans hand with his tears, and to drop but one ſingle tear at the end of each thouſand years, what a terrible duration would this be? Cain the firſt of the damn'd, would have shed but ſix or ſeven, Judas but one; but if he were oblidg'd at the ſame rate to make a brook or a river of his tears, to fill the Sea or the vaſt extent between heaven and Earth, what a prodigious length of time would this require? Our imagination is loſt and confounded in ſo vaſt a duration; but all this great and inconceva bl e extent of time is nothing

to Eternity: A time will come when every one of those wretched Souls will be able to say, one tear for every thousand years that I have been in Hell would have drown'd the Universe and fill'd up the immense space between Heaven and Earth, and yet I have an Eternity of unspeakable torments still to suffer; all I have suffered is nothing to this Eternity; after millions of Ages as many times multiplyed, after an extensive duration in which our thoughts are lost, the fire of Hell will be as violent and fierce, the damn'd will be as capable of torment, and as sensible of their pains, and God as incens'd & as far from being appeas'd as the first moment. June & December.

Oh! dreadfull, Oh! incomprehensible Eternity! were we only to burn for every wicked thought as many millions of Ages as we have liv'd days, hours, or minutes, our pains would have an end at last; but to know certainly that our torments will never end; alwayes to suffer, & be assured that we shall alwayes suffer, to be allwayes thin-

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king on the happineſs we have loſt, on the torments we have brought upon our ſelves, on the means of avoiding them which we have had; to have continually before our eyes the vanity of every thing we have preferr'd to God, and the little while that our pleaſures have laſted, the unutterable ſweetneſs we might have taſted in his ſervice, the vaſt difference between the pains we fear'd in the practiſe of virtue, and thoſe which we are now forc'd to ſuffer in the flames of Hell to have the thoughts of this Eternity allwayes preſent, and to burn, rage, and deſpair for ever: my God! what miſery!

If theſe reflections do not convert us, if the proſpect of thoſe Torments, of this Eternity do's not touch us, if the fear of this everlaſting regret do's not wean us from Sin, and from our vain amuſements, are we rational creatures? are we Chriſtians?

Theſe terrible veritys have made ſo many Martyrs, have peopled the deſerts and daily fill the Convents;

what do we think of these men? did they do wisely? did they do well to neglect nothing, to do all they were able to avoid Hell? *June & December.*

Who would not give all he is worth to be freed from a dungeon? who thinks any pains too great to prolong his Life? But Oh! what do we do, nay what do we not refuse to do to avoid Hell?

The divine Justice is terrible; God punishes these that offend him with Eternal torments in Hell; yet we offend him in the sight of this Hell; certainly an Eternity of misery is not too severe a punishment for such malice; if there were no hell already God should make one on purpose for such offenders.

The thoughts of Hell make us tremble; we are unwilling to think of it least it should affright us; and yet we are not afraid to run headlong into it: we are afraid to think of the Eternal duration of those bitter torments, and yet we will not make one step out of the road that leads to them.

There is an Hell and yet we

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delight in pleasures, and Sinh ath still charms for us; we think the practise of virtue difficult, and there are still careless and imperfect Religious, and debauch'd Christians: this seems as incomprehensible as Eternity it selfe.

You object that perfection is not necessary to avoid hell; true it is not necessary, but can you keep to farr from a Lake of Fire into which so many fall? Can you take too much care and too many precautions to preserve your selfe from everlasting fire, rage, & despair?

How cruel must the thoughts of a damn'd soul be, who knows that he might have been eternally as happy as he is eternally miserable, if he had pleas'd: that he might have been a Saint with ease, and is not because he was not pleas'd to be so: that his Brethren are in heaven, but he is in Hell: he laugh'd at those who being afraid of the condition in which he is now, liv'd otherwise than he did; and now, what would he not do to be what they are? I call'd an holy exactness, melancoly;

a Christian modesty & reservedness I call'd stupidity, & scrupulousness; Oh! that I had been so stupid, so scrupulous and melancoly; that exactness, that reserve has made many Saints who are now in heaven absorpt in Joys; but what is become now that I am in flames, of all my mirth and good humour which I affected to shew by rallying every thing? If I had imitated such and such of my acquaintance, if I had made good use of the divine inspirations such a day; if I had been faithful to such a grace, if I had shun'd such an occasion of Sin, if I had practis'd such a virtue, if I had mortifyed my selfe, if I had been truly willing, I should be now in heaven instead of which I am damn'd to Eternity, I am lost, and lost for ever. Oh terrible regret! And that which aggravates my misery is the remembrance how often I have thought on the pains I now endure, on that eternal regret I should one day feel if I were damned.

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Yet after all this, men damn

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themselves; Great God! thy vengeance is just: they deserve it all.

Is it possible that we can avoid thinking on Hell? is it possible that we can think on it and not be converted? Is it possible that we are converted, and do not continue to think on it? we must have it all wayes before our eyes after our conversion to prevent our falling; the greatest Saints, those pure souls whose hearts were all inflam'd with the Love of God thought it absolutely necessary for them to meditate on Hell, and the apprehensions of it made them tremble; and can any who pretend to virtue, can any Religious man imagine that it is unnecessary to think on Hell? certainly such men dare not think on it; they are conscious to themselves that they do not take pains enough to give them ground to hope that they shall not be condemn'd; but have they less cause to fear because they have a greater account to give? And how can they hope to be less severely punish'd because they are under greater obligations?

Christ had good reason to tell us that Hell is the onely evil we ought to fear; for what is a man the worse for being hated and persecuted; for being reduced to a mean and obscure Life, and for being mortify'd, if he escape being damn'd? June & December.

My God! if thou art resolved to punish me for my Sins, chastise me in this Life, but do not damn me. I will satisfy thy justice here, I will hope in thy mercy, and will love thee; what satisfaction will it be to thee to see me in Hell, surrounded with flames, transported with rage and despair, hating and cursing thee, and eternally blaspheming thy name?

My God! hast thou given me time to think on the pains of Hell, onely to augment my despair one day, for being damn'd after having thought on these pains? Remember I am sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and 'tis through that blood that I beg and hope for mercy; Thou hast paid too great a price for me to be indifferent whether I be lost or no. I will be sav'd; suffer me

Hic ure, hic seca, modo in æternum parcas.

not to be lost; if thou wilt punish me do it in time, but let not my punishment be Eternal.

SECOND MEDITATION.

OF THE FRUITS of Pennance.

FIRST POINT. *Pennance is necessary for all sorts of men.*

SECOND POINT. *What the Fruits of that Pennance ought to be.*

FIRST POINT.

Consider that mortification and pennance is the onely way to heaven; Jesus-Christ shew'd us no other way; and the Saints who from their infancy were confirmed in grace, knew no other. Tis an error to imagine that pennance is necessary onely for great Sinners, and no less an error to think that

mortification is the virtue onely of the perfect; if we be Sinners we muſt do pennance to endeavour to appeaſe the wrath of God, and to obtain mercy and pardon; if we are ſo happy as not to have loſt our innocence, pennance is neceſſary for us to preſerve that precious treaſure: we have ſin'd, we may ſin again, two powerful motives to do pennance. June & December.

Since we all confeſs that men ſin more frequently in the world, and that they are more expos'd to the danger of offending God than in a cloyſter, can we reaſonably believe that pennance belongs onely to Monaſtery's, and that none but Religious are oblig'd to mortification? Do we conſider that many of thoſe Religious whom we think indifpenſably oblig'd to do pennance, never loſt their innocence; & ſhall we who own our ſelves guilty of many Sins, and who are in danger of committing more every moment, ſhall we think to perſuade our ſelves that mortification and pennance do not belong to us?

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It we had nothing but our own passions to overcome could we reasonably hope to conquer them without the exercice of pennance? and who can reasonably hope to be saved without subduing his passions?

It is an article of Faith that none enter into heaven but those who do violence to themselves; and yet we pretend to enter there without mortification. The Life of man upon the earth is a perpetual warfare, for *S. Paul* telles us that the *desires of the flesh are contrary to the desires of the Spirit, and the desires of the spirit are contrary to those of the flesh*; how then can we hope to be victorious without the practise of Pennance?

We please our sensual appetites in every thing, we are careful of our body's even to excess, we follow blindly our natural inclinations, and in this condition we live without fear in the midst of the world where we are expos'd to the greatest dangers. Certainly either we are of a different nature from the rest of mankind, or the Devil stands

stands in awe of us and respects us, or we are confirm'd in Grace, or else we are in danger (which is much more probable) to dye in our Sins: Do's heaven cost the most fervent and generous souls so much, and can we expect that the lazy and imperfect should gain it with less pains? *June & December.*

Saint Paul chastis'd his body, he joyn'd a continual pennance to the cruell persecutions he suffered, for fear of being perverted himselfe while he converted others: And shall men who dare not pretend to be any thing near as perfect as S. Paul, imagine that they have no need to practise mortification?

Were the Saints more frail than we? Did they expect another recompense? Did they follow another guide? or serve another Master? Their lives were a continual mortification, are ours like them? And can we call our selves the Disciples of Christ while we neglect to do pennance? Our Saviour says, if any man will come after me let

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him deny himſelfe and bear his Croſs daily.

True mortification is inſeparable from true piety, not only becauſe no virtue can ſubſiſt long without a conſtant and generous mortification, but allſo becauſe no virtue is real that is not attended with it.

We have great reaſon to diſtruſt our exerciſes of piety, our good works; every thing is to be ſuſpected in thoſe whoſe paſſions are ſtrong, & who are unmortify'd.

It do's not ſeem that we are afraid of the difficulty, we diſlike the motive, for what do we not ſuffer in the ſervice of the world? Alas! if God requir'd of his ſervants, all that the world exacts of thoſe who ſerve it, I am afraid he would have but few ſervants.

How to we conſtrain our ſelves every day to pleaſe thoſe whom our Intereſt requires us to manage? what mortification ſo ſevere and ſo continual as a Courtiers, a Merchants intent upon his trade, a Soldiers, or a ſcholars? Yet they are not dis

courag'd, they ſeem ſatisfy'd amydſt all their ſufferings; but when God calls upon us to conſtrain our ſelves a little, every thing is uneaſy, we find his yoak heavy, virtue frights us, we are disguſted, and the ſole thought of mortification makes us looſe courage. June & December.

But oh! we ſhall have other thoughts on a death bed; when the image of Jeſus-Chriſt crucifyed is preſented to us, will not the ſight of it have a quite contrary effect? it will upbraid our delicacy and increaſe our regret for having lead ſo lazy, ſo ſenſual a Life, for having neglected pennance and mortification.

They preſent a Crucifix to the dying, but my God! do all the dying find much comfort in contemplating a crucifix at their Death? is it poſſible, my dear Jeſus that the mortification which thou haſt render'd ſo eaſy, should ſeem hard and inſupportable only when we are to practiſe it in conformity to thy example, and for Love of thee?

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Oh! my God! what should I do, if thou hadst requir'd of thy servants, if I were bound to do and suffer as much for salvation, as I do and suffer to ruine my selfe, thou requirest less than the world do's, less than I do and suffer in its service, and shall I refuse to do and suffer what is absolutely necessary for salvation, what I have deserv'd by my offenses, and what all the blessed Spirits in heaven have done and suffer'd that they might imitate thee?

Absit mihi gloriari in nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est, & ego mundo. *Gal. 6. 14,*

God forbid that I should glory in any thing but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus-Christ, *by whom the World is crucify'd to me, and I unto the World.*

SECOND POINT.

Consider that by the fruits of pennance is meant not only macerating our body's, but chiefly the mortification of our passions, and the Reformation of our Lives; these are indeed the fruits which God expects from our Contrition and

pennance: by these marks we may know whether we have made good use of the Sacraments, and whether we be truly sorry for our Sins, and faithful to the Grace of God. *June & December.*

The Exercises of Devotion, the frequentation of the Sacrements, and the practise of good works are powerful means of perfection; but while we retain our former passions with these powerful means, while we are as proud, as impatient, as peevish, as envious, as difficult to be pleas'd, as cholerik, as unmortify'd, as ful of selfe-Love as before, can we reasonably rely on these pretended exercises of Piety?

Mortification of the body is an exercise of Pennance, but that pennance must have its fruit, which consists in suppressing our passions, in regulating our inclinations, and in repairing the disorders of self-Love.

To what purpose do we confess so often, if in a whole years time we have not perhaps reformed any one of the faults that we con-

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feſs ? its is not enough for us to deteſt our Sins, we muſt reſolve to commit them no more, and how can that reſolution be ſincere if we do not likewiſe reſolve to avoid the leaſt occaſion of Sin ? The execution of this reſolution is properly the fruit of pennance. In good earneſt if we know the efficacy of this Sacrament of pennance only by the fruits we find of it in our ſelves, ſhould we have an high Idea of it ? It is much to be feared that our uſing our ſelves by an unaccountable careleſneſs, and eſpecially by want of contrition to reap no profit by the Sacrament, will render our diſeaſe incurable.

A Religious Life is a continual pennance, but is there no danger of its being unfruitful ? What a miſerable thing would it be for a Religious to have done penance ſo long without any fruit ? And what fruit can an unmortify'd Religious who is of a worldly ſpirit, lukewarm and careleſs receive from all his pennance ? He is very much in the wrong who bears the Croſs,

and will not taſt the fruits of it? he would not ſuffer more, nay he would ſuffer much leſs, for thoſe fruits are ful of true ſweetneſs. *June & December.*

It is certain that every body has very much to ſuffer in this life; we ſhall meet with Croſſes every where, they who live moſt at their eaſe are not exempted: let us at leaſt bear them patiently, let us unite our ſufferings with the ſuffetings of Chriſt, this will not augment them, but it will make us reap fruit by them.

Another fruit of pennance is a conſtant practiſe of mortification: My God! what fruit may we not gather from this practiſe? Every thing in the world may give us an opportunity to curb our inclinations, there is no place, no time improper for it without deviating from the rules of good ſence. Let him who loves Jeſus-Chriſt truly make a good uſe of theſe little occaſions; have we a great deſire to ſee any object, or to ſpeak in ſome particular occaſion? we may reap great benefit by caſting down our

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Eyes and holding our thoughts. If we have an opportunity to gain applause by saying something very seasonably, or by some witty piece of rallery, we have also an opportunity of making a great Sacrifice. There is scarce an hour where in some subject of mortification do's not present it selfe are we sitting or standing, we may choose an uneasy seat, or a painful posture without seeming to affect it. In fine, the inconveniences of the place, of the season, the disagreableness of the company, born so that we seem not to mind them, are indeed little occasions of mortification, but the mortification its selfe is not little, in these small occasions. It is very meritorious, and I may say that the greatest graces and the most sublime holiness commonly depend upon a generous constant mortification in these small matters. A punctual performance of the duty's of our community, an exact observation of our Rule, a conformity to the common way of living in every thing, without any regard to our

inclinations, our employements, or our Age, are precious fruits of a mortification ſo much the more conſiderable as it is leſs ſubject to vanity. and more conform'd to the Spirit of Chriſt. *June & December.*

Theſe are the true fruits of pennance, what hinders our bearing abundance of them? But there is another fruit of penance yet more neceſſary, and without which all the reſt will avail us little for Eternity; and that is the Reformation of our manners, the victory over our domineering paſſion; Let us obſerve what paſſion is moſt powerful, which habit is ſtrongeſt, to what ſin we are moſt ſubject, which is in ſome manner the ſource of all the reſt, and of all the falſe maximes we frame to our ſelves, in matter of Conſcience. All other ſins may be ſtrangers to us, but the domineering paſſion is our proper caracter, the fruit of a true converſion is to retrench our reigning vice, to conceive an holy deteſtation of that imperious paſſion, to fight againſt it without ceaſing. The Victory over

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this Sin alone will deliver us from the ſtrongeſt temptations : but we willingly attack our other ſins and commonly ſpare this : and this is the true cauſe of our receiving ſo little benefit by our penance.

My God ! what do we ſtay for to become fruitful ? thou haſt cultivated us with ſo much care, we are planted in a ground watered with thy tears and precious blood ; how long ſhall we be unfruitful ? what do we get by bringing forth only thorns ? we feel their points, but we receive no benefit by our pain, becauſe we fly from the Croſs. I am reſolv'd my Dear Saviour to neglect nothing that I may not live ſuch a barren Life : I can do nothing without thy Grace, I can do all things with it, ſince thou giveſt me this Time for penance, ſuffer me not to abuſe it any more ; My God I am reſolv'd to begin this moment to bring forth fruits worthy of penance.

THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE SENTIMENTS we shall have at the hour of Death.

SEE, THE *THIRD MEDITATION*, For the month of *January*.

CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS.

WHICH MAY SERVE

for matter of Conſideration, for every day of Retreat.

OF SALVATION.

ARe we fully convinc'd of the great Truths of our Religion? If we do not believe them, we do too much, but if we do believe what we profeſs we do not do enough. Dare we ſay that the Saints did more than was needful? tho at the end of their Lives, when mens judgments are moſt impartial, they were troubled for having done no more. How different are our Lives from theirs? Do we indeed walk in the ſame way with them? Do we govern our ſelves by the ſame Rules? and yet we pretend to arrive at the ſame place. Good God! have not we reaſon to fear that we are

out of the way? We admire the wisdom of the Saints for practising what they believed; but how little do's our practise agree with our belief? And shall we have cause to applaud our selves on a Death-bed for our past Lives?

Of the importance of Salvation.

What is this Salvation of which we talk so much? this soul? this Eternity? Is it true that I am sent into the world onely to secure it? is it true that I am undone if I do not secure it, tho I should gain the whole world? is it true and do I indeed believe that the business of my Salvation is the greatest business I can have? That it is indeed my only business? That nothing else deserves my care? that this requires all my applicerion, and alone depends on it? if I do not believe this I am lost for ever; and if I do believe it, do not I deserve to be severely punish'd for my indifference, which degenerates into a downtight contempt of Salvation? do I apply

my ſelfe to this great buſineſs? am I much concern'd about it? And what ground have I to hope for ſucceſs while I take ſo little pains? ſhould not I conclude a man ruin'd if he minded his temporal buſineſs no more than I do this difficult, this important buſineſs of Salvation?

Of our indifference for Salvation.

Our indifference for Salvation is ſo great, that we muſt own that of all our affaires we neglect this moſt and lay it leaſt to heart. Whence proceeds this unaccountable indifference for Eternal happineſs? God gave us our lives only to think on it, he judg'd them all little enough to ſucceed in it; Death for ought we know is very near us; what part of our Life have we ſpent in this important buſineſs? How few years, how few days, nay how few hours have we devoted to it? Have we the confidence to reckon thoſe we ſpend in the Church with ſo much diſtraction and voluntary

irreverence? Alas! have we made any great progreſs in thoſe hours? Can we have the face to mention the little time we have given to haſty prayers without Devotion, to Confeſſions without ſorrow and without Reformation, to Communions without fruit, or to a few pretended good works which we have loſt by doing them upon natural, or which were corrupted by bad motives?

We are ſo taken up with ſuperfluous cares and worldly buſineſs that we can ſpare but a little Time to think of our Salvation, and we grudge the little time we ſpend in thinking of it. What reaſon can we give for ſuch an unreaſonable conduct? unleſs we will own that it proceeds from want of Faith. If we believ'd that the enjoyment of God, that an Eternity of infinite happineſs, or miſery (which includes & ſurpaſſes all other miſerys) depended on our diligence; if we did really believe what we repeat ſo often, that we can not ſerve God and the world at once, that time is

short, and that Death approaches; that each moment for ought we know may be our laſt; if we did indeed believe that Salvation is our own work and that we onely can ſecure; it that it is no matter what becomes of us here if we make ſure of heaven, that we looſe all even temporal bleſſings by neglecting our Souls, and that if we be truly careful of them we shall looſe nothing not even worldly goods; if we do ſeriouſly believe theſe things, how can we be careful, how can we be ſollicitous for any thing but Salvation?

Of the falſe pretences of orldly men about Salvation.

Tis very ſurprizing that men of Sence and wiſdom who reaſon ſo well about every thing elſe, should reaſon ſo very falſly when they are deſired to think on and work out their Salvation: they freely own that it is hard to ſecure it in the world, they will make lively and pathetical deſcriptions of the Cor-

ruptions of the Age, they are very eloquent on the inevitable dangers to which men are expos'd in the world, and they readily conclude that they who live in it ſtand in as much need of an Heroik virtue as the Religious in their Convents; but when they are told that in order to Salvation it is neceſſary for them to overcome themſelves to mortify their paſſions, to follow the example of Chriſt and his Saints they pretend that theſe vertues do not belong to them, that 'tis not their buſineſs, that their condition do's not oblige them to ſo great a Sacrifice, and that none but Religious can live regulary, and conformably to the maxims of Jeſus-Chriſt. Is it not natural to conclude from hence that either the work of Salvation is not a ſecular Chriſtians buſineſs, (which is a moſt groſs and damnable error,) or elſe that Secular Chriſtians do indeed renounce their Salvation?

Of the Facility of Salvation. Of the ill use of the means Salvation.

God could have put us under a neceſſity of ſeeking him continually as our ultimate End and of never departing from him, but he muſt then have taken away our Liberty; when we reflect on the vaſt number of Chriſtians who looſe their Souls, we are ready to wish that he had ſubject'd us to that happy neceſſity of working out our Salvation; that ſo we might not be tormented with the fear of Hell. But could we deſire him to ſecure our Salvation better than by putting into our own hands? And becauſe he has made me maſter of my deſtiny, of my eternal happineſs, shall I therefore be unhappy? Shal this render my Salvation doubtful? shall this put me in greater danger? I might have reaſon to be afraid if it depended on another tho my beſt friend, but it depends only on me by the help of grace which will never be

wanting to me; yet this is the chief cauſe of my ruine. O my God! if I do not ſecure my Salvation, now that thou haſt made me maſter of it, I muſt own that I deſerve judgment without mercy, & nothing leſs than an Eteernal punishment.

Of the ill uſe of the means of Salvation.

Can we think of our unprofitableneſs under ſuch powerful means, of our ſlighting ſo many graces, and rendring them uſeleſs to us, without apprehending leaſt God ſhould ſay to us as the *Apoſtle* to the *Jews, the Word of God was firſt ſpoken to you?* You were born in the boſom of the Church, you were tranſplanted into the fertile field of Religion, into a ground cultivated by the Labours and water'd with the ſweat and blood of him who is both God and man. How many means and helps have we had to enable us to fulfill all the duty's of our Station, and to make

Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei. *Act.* 13. 46.

us fruitfull in good works? but since these means and assistances which were so proper to have made us bring forth an hundred fold, have been useless to us; have we not reason to fear least he should add, But seeing you put that divine word from you, & judge your selves unworthy of everlasting Life behold we turn to the Gentiles: This sentence is already executed on Syria and on almost all the East, where Christianity first began, and a great part of the North, particularly unhappy England; those nations formerly such good Christians and who reckon among their Ancestors so many great Saints, have in these latter times cut themselves off from the fold of Christ, while the Indians and people of Iapan and many other barbarous nations are enter'd into the Church, and have reviv'd the primitive fervour & piety, equalling the generosity of the most glorious Martyrs.

Sed quoniam repellitis illud, & indignos vos judicatis æternæ vitæ, ecce convertimur ad gentes. ℣. 46.

Of want of Faith.

Whence comes it that we make no difficulty of believing the miſtery's of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, &c. tho they are not only above our underſtandings but ſeem to ſhock our Reaſon? Is it not becauſe theſe myſtery's do not contradict our paſſions? but do we believe with the ſame facility the other truths of the Goſpell, the Doctrines of ſelfdenyal, of contempt of the world, of love of poverty and humiliation? Yet my God! they are all grounded upon the ſame infaillible Authority, thy holy word: for' tis as certain that we ſhall nevet enter into the Kingdom of Heaven if we do not deny our ſelves, ſubdue our paſſions. and love our Enemy's; as it is that we ſhal never entet there if we are not baptis'd: Yet we rely very much on our faith, for every man pretends to be one of the faithful, not conſidering that we have but a dead Faith; and that we confound

the knowledge of what we ought to believe with that true Christian Faith which is allway's fruitful in good works, and without which there is no virtue.

Of the thoughts Hell,

We believe that there is an Hell of fire and dreadful torments: and that one mortall sin is sufficient to condemn a soul to Eternal pains; and yet are we much afraid of mortal Sin? do we not fear Eternal flames and torment? Our trembling at the thoughts of Hell shews we believe it, If the thoughts of its pains be so terrible, what will it be to feel them all? how great will our despair and anguish be when we call to mind that we would not avoid that Hell at the thoughts of which we have so often trembled?

Of a miserable Eternity.

We talk very much of an unhappy Eternity, but do we know what it is? by often speaking of it

we uſe our ſelves to the thoughts, and ſo come to be very little affected with it? A man that is accuſtomed to that continual viciſſitude of ſeaſons, of years, of months, and days, amus'd by its variety and diverted by its novelty finds himſelfe in Eternity before he is aware; and in that inſtant the Soul enters into an unchangable ſtate, it is in the ſame condition and in the ſame place where it ſhall remain to all Eternity: from that firſt moment it ſuffers the ſame Eternal torments which it ſhall alwayes ſuffer, ſo that every minute it ſuffers an Eternity.

In this wretched Eternity all the different parcels of Time concurr and unite as in one point to make the damn'd miſerable, 'tis a globe of an infinite weight which bears on an indiviſible point? 'tis a duration without end; here theſe unhappy creatures ſuffer all the torments which the omnipotence of God can inflict, they ſuffer them all at once without any intermiſſion, and they ſuffer them all perpetually without

rny hope of eaſe, without any hope that their torments ſhall ever end, or they grow leſs ſenſible of them. My God how dread full is this! If theſe pains were to end after as many millions of ages as there have paſs'd moments ſince the Creation of the woild, if every ſinful thought were to be punish'd only with an hundred millions of ages in Hell, and a momentary act of Sin with a thouſand times as many, the ſinners madneſs would be more tolerable tho incapable of excuſe; tho they laſted long, they would at length have an end; but to be everlaſting; to be allways ſuffering and burning, & certain to ſuffer and burn for ever without any diminution; my God! what exceſs of miſery!

Suppoſe a Soul condemn'd to the flames of Hell till he had fill'd this Chamber with tears, at the rate of one tear in a thouſand years, what a terrible extent of time muſt he ſuffer? Cain has not yet shed above five or ſix but how much more is requir'd to fill the houſe? yet more

to

to make ſeveral great Rivers, yet more to fill the ſea, and infinitely more to drown the whole Univerſe, & fill the ſpace between Heaven and Earth: Our imaginations are confounded and loſt in ſuch a vaſt duration; the thought ſtunns us; yet alas! this though ſo terrible & inconcevable is not Eternity; it is not ſo much as a part of Eternity; for after all this Time is paſt Eternity will be ſtill entire; And a time will come when every damn'd ſoul ſhall be able to ſay that he might have fill'd & drown'd the whole univerſe by ſhedding one tear for every thouſand years that he has been in Hell, and yet he is ſtill to undergo a whole Eternity of ſufferings; that diſmall Eternity is not yet diminish'd one moment. Can we yet find ſatisfaction in unlawful pleaſures? Can we delight to ſin? can Sin have any charms for us?

My Gracious God! My good Maſter! my loving Saviour! do not damn me, or rather do not ſuffer me to damn my ſelfe; for I know thou wilt not condemn me till I have

by my repeated infidelity's and Sins renounc'd my title to Eternal happineſs. Am I worthy to be the object of thy incenſed wrath, of ſo long and ſo ſevere a vengeance? O my ſoul! ariſe and work, do all that is required of thee to be ſaved; while it is in thy power ſave thy ſelf tho all the reſt of the world perish: this is a terrible truth but it is a certain truth. We can never comprehend this Eternity of torments, but we can much leſs comprehend how a Sinner can believe it & yet live in Sin. Are we afraid to think of Hell? 'This true the thoughts of it have made the ſtouteſt tremble, and the greateſt Saints quake; but will our not thinking of it take it away, or render it leſs terrible? will our not thinking of it make us have leſs reaſon to fear damnation?

The Fire of Hell is indeed dreadfull; yet an eminent ſervant of God obſerves, that it is ſlight in comparaiſon of the ſtings of Conſcience, of the remembance of what is paſt, and of the time they have miſ-

pent; their thoughts will be Eternally taken up with lively Idea's of the vanity of all those things which drew them away from God, & they will incessantly call to mind, how easily they might have been saved, how easily they might have confess'd such a sin, & have avoided such an occasion of falling. How many years of health did I enjoy after my fall? Why did I deferr my Conversion to a death Bed? where was all the wisdom for which I valued my selfe so much? I who was thought a judicious man & capable of advising others well: I needed onely to have done what such and such have done; it depended only on me; I often design'd & resolv'd to do it. but I have not done it. Oh! that I had made these reflections while I might have been the better for them: Alas! I did make them, but unprofitably; I might have been a Saint if I would. I would not and am therefore justly damn'd.

Of the pretended Converſion of the Imperfect.

Men conſecrated to the ſervice of God are often very little touch'd with diſcourſes of the neceſſity of being converted without delay: becauſe they look upon themſelves as perfectly converted ever ſince they contracted at their entrance into Religion, a greater obligation to be thorowly converted; but they do not conſider that it is eaſier to change their ſtate than their manners; that a new ſort of dreſs is not capable of ſubduing their paſſions, nor of extirpating their vitious inclinations; this new form of Life, this outward change dazles them at firſt, their paſſions are charm'd by its novelty, the grace of God which alway's abounds at ſuch a time excites ſome good deſires in the moſt imperfect, in thoſe happy beginnings every thing ſeems eaſy to them; but it is this that ſo often deceives beginners; they take the common effects of change and novelty for the

effects of grace they are so satisfy'd with their imaginary progress in the beginning that they persuade themselves the work is done, that they have nothing to fear, and thus they lull themselves in a false security, but when custom has inur'd them to this new course of Life, when the charms of novelty are over, then their passions revive with greater strength, and are so much the more violent in that they find nothing to amuse them, and that they have layn still and have been curb'd so long: then their first inclinations return, their natural temper gets the upperhand, & they being careless and secure it is easy to imagine the ravage which such dangerous enemys make in a soul that is not upon its guard. And this is the cause that so many Religious are found more unmortify'd, more greedy of pleasures, more fond of honours, less sensible of the eternal truths of our Religion, less faithfull to the Grace of God, and much more imperfect; after three or four

years, than they were the first day of their Conversion.

Of the false Idea which many frame to themselves of Virtue.

There is certainly some virtue among the greatest part of Christians, but it is very much degenerated from the virtue of the first Ages of the Church; it is a pliable complaisant virtue; it has so much of God as serves to gain a reputation & to make its selfe esteemed, it allway's finds out a medium between the maxims of Christ, and those of the world, and therefore it is positively condemn'd by Jesus-Christ and hath nothing but the name of virtue. My God! these half Christians are very unhappy, while they endeavour to please both God and the world, they never please men and alwayes displease God. Their maxim is that we must be well bred, that we must have an easy indulgent virtue; which agrees with what

they call good ſence, as if the ſpirit and maxims of Chriſt were contrary to good ſence. My God! how directly oppoſite is this pretended virtue to the Goſpel? and what abundance of ſouls do's it ruine? Who perſuade themſelves that they need not be ſo recollected, ſo exact, ſo modeſt, that they are men and muſt live like men while they converſe with them; Yes; you are men but remember you are Chriſtians, Church men, or Religious.

Of the little progreſs we make in Virtue.

We ſhould be very much asham'd to own our ſelves or to be thought as ignorant after ten & twenty years ſtudy of the ſciences, as we were the firſt half year; and much more asham'd to have it thought that we are contented to be ſo. And yet how many who make profeſſion of piety, whoſe great buſineſs it is to become perfect, are not asham'd to confeſs, & to have it believed, that they would think themſelves happy

if after as many years ſtudy in the ſublime ſcience of Salvation, they were but as fervent as mortifyed and as near being Saints, as when they were but ſix months converted? they do indeed ſtrive to banish thoſe thoughts by giving themſelves up to the inſipid pleaſures of a careleſs Life, but ſooner or later Death will come, and what will their thoughts be then?

Of the proper Virtues for every condition.

It would be a great imprudence & a dangerous error in Directors to exhort all the world alike to the ſame degree of Perfection, and to conduct them by the ſame methods: there are *many manſions*, many places, & divers orders in the Kingdom of God, and tho all the inhabitants of the Heavenly Jeruſalem are fully content and perfectly happy, yet they poſſeſs different degrees of Glory; There are Seraphims and Angels, and they who are not worthy of the ſame Rank

Manſiones multæ ſunt in regno Patris mei. Joan. 12. 4.

with the Apoſtles, the Martyrs, and the Virgins, may have a bleſſed place a mong the Penitents. As all do not receive the ſame meaſure of grace in this Life, ſo neither do they recive the ſame weight of glory in the next; But it is no leſs dangerous under this pretence to confine our deſires and deſigns within the narrow bounds of an ordinary virtue, when perhaps we have been favourd with extraordinary graces, and are called to a ſtate which requires great perfection. Tis true, all can not be equally perfect, but all are called ro be Saints, & he that would be a Saint muſt acquire & practiſe every virtue proper to his Station: the ſame perfection is not requir'd of all in the ſame Station; but the more perfect our ſtate is, the greater perfection is requir'd of us; that virtue which may be ſufficient for a Layman is not ſufficient for a Religious, they who are called to Apoſtolical fonctions are indiſpenſably oblig'd to a more ſublime virtue; and God requires

Diviſiones gratiarum ſunt. 1. Cor. 12. 4.

a greater Sanctity in Priests than in those who are not ordain'd.

Of the world.

Worldly men render themselves objects of pity when they endeavour to persuade us that they are happy; tho they should always dissemble their vexations and discontents, yet no man who knows of what sort of people the world is compos'd, and what it requires of those that serve it, can believe a worldling happy. It is compos'd of men who love nothing but themselves, who think no Law so inviolable as their own interests, & pleasures; 'tis a confus'd medly of people of different caracters & inclinations; where each man full of himselfe is contented only with what he likes, and likes onely what pleases him: One (says an holy man) is pufft up with a vain title which he dishonours by his actions, another is proud of his rich cloth's which are yet unpaid; this man values

himſelfe upon anohers merit, that man frets and pines away with vexation becauſe the world has not as good an opinion of him as he has of himſelfe; others break their reſt to heap up Riches of which they have no need, of which afterwards they make no uſe. When they have ruin'd their health to yet an Eſtate, they ſpend this Eſtate to recover their health; they muſt be always on the watch againſt envy and jealouſy, againſt the ſurpriſes of this Competitor & the other Enemy; they ſuſpect all the world, and indeed there are but few real friends to be found in it.

What abundance of pains are daily loſt in ſerving the world? When you have labour'd with all the earneſtneſs and diligence imaginable in its ſervice, if you are unſucceſsful it gives you no thanks, you looſe its favour, you ſhall be whole years unfortunate without knowing it, and upon the firſt appearance of a fault it decry's and diſgraces you, and values you no more? It is not

ſufficient to ſerve diligently and well, unleſs you have fouud the ſecret to pleaſe which frequently do's not depend on us; nay, which is yet more ſtrange, they who would not diſpleaſe the world muſt not ſeem deſirous to pleaſe; if it once diſcovers that they have that deſign, it thinks it ſelfe exempt from all obligation: it neither rewards the ſervices of thoſe who are not zealous enough for it intereſt, nor the care and pains of thoſe who make it their whole buſineſs to gain its favour.

Do you rely upon your friends in the world? while you are powerfull and in a capacity of obliging many, you will never want a great number of friends, but the moment you fall into diſgrace, the moment you are no longer capable of ſerving them, thoſe pretended friends all diſapear and apply thsmſelves onely to him that ſucceeds you: and tho you were never ſo much a ſlave to a great man, he thinks it a ſufficieut reward for all your ſervices to ſend

ſome footman to enquire how you do when you are on your Death-bed.

How deſirous are we to be taken notice of? but how can we expect to diſtinguish our ſelves among ſuch a multitude of pretenders, who all think themſelves endow'd with ſome excellent quality, with ſome extraordinary merit? what is this admiration of which we are ſo fond? (ſaith the holy man before cited) do you know that wiſe men admire no thing? that weak men don't admire what deſerves it moſt, becauſe it is above their reach, and they are incapable of judging? thoſe qualitys which you think deſerve moſt admiration ſeem very indifferent to others; they have as great an opinion of their own wiſdom, virtue, and capacity as we have of ours; we think they are partial to themſelves, and they judge the ſame of us.

Yet the world is ſome times very free of its praiſes, becauſe it ſees every body deſirous of them; but if we reflect a little we ſhall find that

those great marks of esteem, those extraordinary praises, are the very same words of course, which we use every day to those whom we esteem least, have we not observ'd that they who are most lavish of their praises to a mans face, are the first that speak ill of him when they are at Liberty to vent their thoughts. Can we have so little sence as to imagine that we are the only persons to whom men speak sincerely, and that altho they praise all the rest of the world, either out of rallery, or at best out of civility & custom, yet they are in earnest when they praise us? Many believe that all the world admires them when indeed all the world pitys them. They persuade themselves that all their actions are taken notice of to their advantage, because they do not consider that every mans thoughts are taken up with himselfe, & that he whom they think their admirer, fancy's that they admire him.

Add to these the many cruel troubles and vexations which men feell continually, but are forc'd to

diſſemble; how often in order to keep up their reputation are they oblig'd to ſpend more than their revenue? how often do they find their fortunes decaying, & yet dare not moderate their expence? They are forc'd to laugh when their hearts are ready to break: the whole world is nothing but outſide and grimace, and he paſſes for the happieſt man who can diſſemble his griefs beſt.

'Tis the deſire of Liberty that ordinarily engages men in the world; but can men be in a greater ſubjection, & a more abſolute dependance? not only in the army, but in buſineſs, in every profeſſion, we are continually ſubject to the humours & will of others.

Certainly a worldling is the uneaſieſt man living, but it is his own fault; he may render his troubles meritorious if he will; he need not ſuffer ſo much to be a great Saint, if he would but ſuffer for God; Yes my God! the greateſt part of Chriſtians would think thy yoak inſupportable, if they were

bound to do half ſo much to pleaſe thee as the world exacts of them; they are certainly in the wrong not to make uſe of thoſe plentiful means of ſanctification which they all have, they need not go out of their own Station to find opportunity's of meriting very much. They are inceſſantly complaining of the Vanity of the world, yet they are every moment engaging themſelves farther among thoſe vanity's, and grow every hour fonder of them.

Of the Confidence we ought to have in the merits of Chriſt.

The conſideration that the merits and ſatisfaction of Chriſt belong to us is a ſolid ground of Confidence; Let our wounds be never ſo dangerous we have a certain cure for them; tho we were more in debt to the Divine juſtice than we are, tho our debts be never ſo great, we are in a condition to pay them all, for we find in the merits of Chriſt &c

in his precious blood, a treasure that infinitely surpasses them; he had no need of them for himselfe, he hath bestow'd them on us, so that though we should have been so unhappy as to have committed the most heinous crimes, tho we saw the most terrible effects of the divine wrath ready to fall on us, if we can but make one single act of true relyance on the satisfaction of Jesus, & offer it up to thee my God, we shall no longer need to fear our own sins, nor thy wrath, being shelter'd from them by our Saviours Cross, & wash'd with his precious blood, the merits of which he is pleas'd to apply to us.

Of our indifference to please God.

When we value any ones friendship we endeavour (says an eminent Servant of God) to acquire & preserve our selves in his favour, by a thousand Services by shewing all the respect and zeal imaginable even in things to which our duty

do's not absolutely oblige us, & by avoiding every thing which may in the least displease him. The fear of punishment keeps us from attempting the Life of the man we hate, we do neither good nor harm to those whom we think below our notice; but when we deliberately & frequently affront a man 'tis an evident sign that we neither value his Love nor fear his hatred; and if we do not offer him the highest injury's 'tis not because we care for his aversion, but because we fear his power. They who abstain only from great sins and allow themselves a Liberty in every thing else, have reason to fear that charity is absolutely extinguish'd in their hearts: and if they will examine themselves they shall find that it is only the apprehension of the severity with which God punishes heinous sins that keeps them from committing them: they would willingly displease him if the sight of Hell did not stop them, they wish with all their hearts they might sin without punishment. This is a fearfull disposition, yet

it is the disposition of those who indulge themselves in deliberate Venial Sins: God hath no share in the motives that make them abstain from great Crimes, and therefore he is not obliged to assist them; which renders it exceeding difficult for a man who desires to avoid only mortal Sins, to be long free from them.

Of Confession.

Tho Sacrament of Penance is an easy and efficacious remedy for all the diseases of the Soul, and a certain means to obtain the pardon of all our Sins; nothing is more easy than to declare all our Sins to a Priest who represents Christ, with a true and sincere sorrow for having offended our good & gracious God who has lov'd us so well. To what purpose do we confess our Sins if we are not sorry for them and resolv'd to Sin no more? As it is easy, so it is efficacious because all the merits of the Son of God are apply'd to us by this Sacrament. But whence

is it that we receive no more bene-fit by this Divine remedy? Never were confeſſions more frequent, never was there leſs amendment, cuſtom brings us to Confeſſion, and cuſtom makes us return to the Sins we have confeſs'd, as if we had no other deſign in frequenting the Sacrament, but to grow familiar with our Sins. If our confeſſions be inſincere we ſeem to have a deſign of rendriug our ſelves more criminal by our confeſſions: we want contrition, we content our ſelves with a ſlight & ſuperficial Sorrow, eſpecially when our intereſt invites us to continue in our Sins, or when we fancy they are common & ſmall ones; we want reſolution and vigorous purpoſes of amend-ment; we content our ſelves with deſigning to committ the ſame ſins no more, but we will not avoid the occaſions that have made us fall. Which is a clear proof that our contrition is not ſincere: are we ignorant that the want of contri-tion is a grievous ſin? or if we do know it, and pretend to ſtrive to

raiſe it in our Souls, it is much to be fear'd that the Confeſſions of many are null for all that? becauſe the motive of this pretended Contrition is often onely the fear of being guilty of Sacriledge, and hence it is that as ſoon as our Confeſſion is over, and we are no longer in danger of committing Sacriledge, we relapſe again into the ſame faults as if we had never confeſs'd them: A man of ſence who has ſeriouſly weigh'd the Reaſons on both ſides, is not eaſily perſuaded to change his deſign; and can we imagine that our frequent falls were preceded by a ſincere reſolution to ſin no more? had we no motives to make that reſolution? If God was indeed our motive, why did we ſo ſoon change our minds? Did we take that generous reſolution upon weak motives? Since our motive ſubſiſts ſtill why do we not continue in the ſame deſign? we ought certainly to make but very little account of thoſe confeſſions that are not followed with amendment. My God! how will the remembrance of ſuch confeſſions

trouble and torment us when we come to dye? One visible mark of true conntrition is, when we hate the occasions of Sin as much as Sin it selfe, when we do indeed abhorr the smallest Sins.

Of Private Friendships.

Saint Basile teaches us that there should be a perfect union between all the Religious of the same Communnity, but no particular Friendships; tho such private engagements may seem very iunocent, they are a formall separation from all the rest of the body; who loves one of his Brethren more than the rest shews by that preference that he do's not love the others perfectly, and thereby he offends and wrongs the whole Community; These private unions (adds the same Saint) are a continual Seed of Discord, of envy & suspicions, of distrust and hatred; they give occasion to divisions, to secret meetings & cabals which are the ruine of Religion: In those meetings, one discovers his designs, another vents his rash judgments,

Basil in Const. Monast. ca. 30.

Serm. de instit. Monach.

a third complains, & a fourth reveals what he ought to keep secret; hence proceed murmurings and backbitings, uncharitable censures and undutifull reflections, upon Superiours, and by an unhappy contagion these ill dispositions communicate themselves from one to another; and indeed the Devil has no temptation more dangerous, and more capable of perverting the most fervent, especially young men, than these particular friendships. As soon as one of these friends is vex'd and thinks himselfe ill us'd, all the rest share in his discontent; he gives his passion vent and they approve it either out of complaisance or a turbulent humour. By this means they break their Rules, & to shew their friendship act contrary to their duty: If such engagements were onely betwcen the most virtuous, yet they ought not to be suffer'd because they are particular. But they are seldom found among the truly virtuous, they are too opposite to real piety, and are almost peculiar to the imperfect. Observe a careless lazy Re-

ligious. you will soou find him seeking some particular Friendship contrary to the true spirit of charity and Religion. *Saint Ephrem* tells us that *those unions and private conferences are very prejudicial to the Soul* & are great obstacles to true Piety; they destroy insensibly the spirit of Devotion, and make the Soul weary of pious conversation; they inspire a secret aversion for the fervent, and render their very presence uneasy; 'tis in these particular friendships that the best resolutions miscarry, in these the noblest sentiments which the Soul had entertain'd in prayer, at the Communion, & at Mass are lost: in these all the charitable remonstrances of superiours, & the saving counsells of Directors are rendred useless, either by turning them into raillery, or by advancing maxims directly contrary to the spirit of Jesus-Christ. There are few virtues proof against these occasions; Alas! how many who had begun well have split upon this Rock, aud been at last miserably ruin'd by these dangerous

Familiaritates aut colloquia ejusmodi haud exiguum detrimentum pariunt animæ. *S. Ephr.*

dangerous engagements with their false Friends? Therefore this Saint advises carefully to avoid such particular friendships, to lay this down as a principle that in Religion we must have no such intimacy with any; Our friendships must be only spiritual, not built like those friendships upon flesh & blood or any other humane considerations, but founded only on God.

Of the happiness of a Religious Life.

How great is your Satisfaction O Religious Souls, if you have given your selves without any reserve to Christ, you must be very unhappy if you, be not content with so good a master. Every step you make in weaning your hearts from worldly objects that you may fix them more absolutely on him, will be an addition to your happiness. All you have to fear is least some part of your joy should proceed from that natural peace & tranquility which a Life undisturb'd with cares

and noiſe affords; for then it would be a falſe joy: you muſt ſeek the Croſs, you muſt chooſe and love that Croſs which is moſt uneaſy to you, and moſt thwarts your inclinations; you may eaſily find ſuch a Croſs every Day in your convent, you will continually meet with ſomething that contradicts your humour, or diſpleaſes your fancy; you ought to be watchful to make good uſe of theſe precious opportunitys of renouncing your own judment and will in all things, without this ſubmiſſion your peace is imperfect, and will ſoon be at an end. 'Tis a ſolid happineſs to live in a Society where ſuch perfect Piety and ſo much Virtue reigns; tho the truly fervent ſoul who ſeeks onely God, would not be the worſe although there were leſs Piety in his Community, becauſe he is ſo taken up with watching over and correcting his own faults that he has no leiſure to mind other mens: every thing helps thoſe who have a good intention: the bad examples which corrupt the weak, are ſo

many incitements to increase his Love to his Redeemer, that he may repair their negligence by his fervour and by an holy fear preserve himselfe from imitating them. Yet it is a great advantage to be sorrounded with good examples, to have alwayes those excellent models before our eyes to stirr us up to diligence, and to make us a sham'd when we begin to languish. We shall alwayes find such examples in numerous convents; but if we have not living examples, let us profit by the dead; to this end it will be very usefull to read frequently and carefully the Lives of those of your order, who by the practise of the duty's of your vocation arriv'd to an eminent degree of Sanctity: but here you must have your superior's leave for you had better do nothing than undertake any thing without their approbation; if they give you leave, you should be careful to observe in your Reading, by what ways and methods those holy Souls arriv'd through the Grace of Christ to such

a degree of perfection; and you will find that having the same graces you may easyly practise the greatest part of what they did. I have but one thing more to add, but it is very essential, and I pray God it may never be out of your thoughts, for I am sure if you observe it, you will find the satisfaction of it all the rest of your Life; Remember you enter'd into Religion onely to save your Souls, and to prepare for the account you must give to God when he shall think fit to call you; this ought to be your onely care; you will be examined how you have kept your vows & observ'd your Rule, be alwayes ready to answer. Let others live as they please, tis none of your business, it is a dangerous temptation to trouble your selves with others mens actions, it is enough for you to know what is requir'd of you, to be perswaded that what ever your Superious command whether you think it reasonable or no, provided it be not sinful is indeed the will of God; this is as

certain as the preſence of Jeſus-Chriſt in the holy Sacrament. For that very thing which you diſlike is moſt infallibly in your circumſtances, the means which God judges moſt proper for your Sanctification: A ſuperior may governe ill, but it is moſt certain that God governs you well by his means, think ſeriouſly of this, for if you do not abſolutely lay down this principle, you looſe all your Time: A Religious Life is nothing but Obedience: No obedience can be meritorious that is not render'd to God in the perſon of thoſe whom he has ſet in his place, and they who diſpute, examine and condemn their orders, do not conſider God in them. If the ſpirit of God dwell in us he will give us the ſimplicity of a little Infant, who thinks every thing good and reaſonable, he will inſpire us with that celeſtial prudence which ſees God in every thing, which finds him in all perſons, even in thoſe who have leaſt virtues, and but few of the natural or ſupernatural qualitys

which represent him. The greater your parts are the more submissive you ought to be, because there is nothing more reasonable and more advantageous than to be govern'd by God, in what manner or by what person so ever he signify's his will; we can not begin too soon after our entrance into Religion, to love Poverty; we shall find an inexpressible satisfaction to be able to tell our Saviour, my Dear Saviour! I have nothing but thee; I have no affection to any of those things which I have leave to use; if I should find my heart inclin'd to any thing but thy selfe I would keep that thing no longer; My God! what a satisfaction is it to dye with a Crucifix before us, after having liv'd in conformity to a crucify'd Saviour?

Of the Confidence we ought to have in Jesus-Christ present in the Eucharist.

It is our want of confidence in Christ that hinders our profiting by

his presence in the holy Sacrament, for he do's not dwell among us to no purpose; but our Faith is so weak, and we have recourse to him so very seldom, that it is no wonder if we receive no more of those enlightning Graces and blessings which he communicates to those who seek him as their Master, and who come to him as to the fountain of all Perfection. It is no wonder that the Devil omits no invention to keep Christians from frequent Communion and to disgust them with it, or at least to make them have an indifference for our Saviour in that adorable Sacrament; for he knows that as love for Jesus in that holy Mistery is the source of all good and of all graces, so the neglect of it is commonly the cause of all the evil that we suffer.

Of true fervour.

It is much to be fear'd that we often take the privation of sensible affections for a want of fervour, and look upon interior consola-

tions as a mark of it; by which means as ſoon as we find our ſelves dry & arid, we looſe courage a d committ faults which we take no care to correct ſpeedily, & from thence we degenerate into tepidity.

Beſides we are apt to imagine that to live as holily as when we were full of devotion we muſt needs endeavour to recover the ſame ardor that we have loſt; but it is juſt the contrary; we muſt begin with humbling and mortifying our ſelves, as if we were warm'd with ſenſible Graces; it is not our fervour that renders us humble, charitable, regular, and mortify'd, it is a generous exercice of humility, charity, regularity, and mortification; it is a conſtant practiſe of theſe virtues that makes us fervent as we ought to be: this is a very important leſſon which if we would ſtudy well, and practiſe often, we should ſoon find our ſelves very much advanc'd in the way of Perfection.

Of Voluntary Poverty.

My God! when shal I be ſenſible of the happineſs of Poverty? when shall I love it as well as thou loveſt thoſe who practiſe it? what will a vow of Poverty avail us if we are continually diſturb'd with fears of being redue'd to want, if we are unwilling to feel what it is to be poor? if we will needs be as ſure to want for nothing as the Rich themſelves: who would not be poor at ſuch a rate? What merit can we pretend before God from a convenient Poverty? wherein we are often better provided for, than we were before we own'd to be poor; & in which we want for nothing.

Of Aridity in the Exerciſes of Piety.

We are much in the wrong to diſquiet and torment our ſelves for want of conſolations, and tender affections in Prayer; to labour

after ſenſible guſts in receiving, and in other Dutys; while we neglect little faults & small obſervances, and let ſlip the occaſions of denying our ſelves, of ſubduing our wills, of conquering our fear of men, & of humbling our ſelves before the world; if we were wiſe theſe things would take up all our thoughts, and we should not make the leaſt ſtep towards pleaſing our fancy's in ſpiritual exerciſes; indeed 'tis only pleaſing our fancy's for the true way of performing our Devotion well, is humbly and patiently to ſuffer that aridity and the depriuation of that pretended fervour of which we are naturally ſo fond, and which the true Love of God deſpiſes and rejects with all its force.

Of the facility with which we engage our ſelves in the world.

We readily confeſs that they whom God calls particularly to his ſervice are happy; that being free

from the vexations to which men who live in the world are expos'd, they enjoy a ſweet peace and tranquility of Conſcience which is the ordinary fruit of virtue: How often do the greateſt worldlings own that a Religious man is happy? yet no ſooner do's a young man deſign to quit the world and to embrace this happy ſtate, but he meets with a multitude of obſtacles from his friends and Relations, who ſuggeſt to him that he ought to ſpend ſome years in trying the truth of his vocation; they make a lively deſcription of what he muſt expect to ſuffer in the ſtate of Life which he deſigns to follow, and they exagerate all the difficulties of it. One would think by their tears that he was going to make himſelfe unhappy, or at leaſt to hazard his Life and his Soul too. But if he has a mind to continue in the world, they do not think ſo many precautions neceſſary, nor do they require ſo much time to reſolve; they know this vocation is much more perilous, yet they do not exact

so long a tryall; instead of aggravating the difficulties, they study to disguise them, and to palliate those real evils which they cannot hide; with what pleasure do they see an onely son of great hopes, engage himselfe in the world? they never trouble themselves to enquire whether he has thought sufficiently of it; on the contrary, they fear nothing so much as his entertaining the design of leaving it; what can be the cause of this? can Salvation be better secur'd in the world? no certainly; but the true Reason is that Salvation is generally the last thing men think of, when they are deliberating what course of Life to choose.

Of the false Idea's which men have of Holiness.

Tis exceeding strange; every man considers holiness with reference to the Station in which he is not; and but few apply themselves to acquire that holiness which is proper to their own Station; the Poor

are taken up with thinkiug on the opportunities the Rich have to be sav'd; and the rich are persuaded that it is an easy matter to sanctify ones selfe, wheu one is free from the obstacles that proceed from wealth; the young think no reason so proper to work for Salvation as old Age; Youth say they is a time of pleasure we will think of Salvation another time; And the Aged continually regret the means of Sanctification which they enjoy'd in theyr youth; and find themselves incapable of many good works wich they could have done then. Seculars place holiness in the austerity's peculiar to a Religious Life, and from thence conclude their condition unfit for it; and the Religious often loose courage in the way of perfection which they have chosen because they consider Sanctity only in hair shirts and sackcloth, and in those heroique actions which we admire in the Lives of some great Saints. And thus by framiug a false Idea of Holiness the greatest part of Christians are disgusted with it,

and live as if there were no Sanctity proper for their Station. My God! how many mischiefs proceed from this mistake.

Of the Sanctity proper for every Station.

Every man should examiue what Sanctity is requir'd of him in the Station to which God hath called him; *the Will of God is that we should be Saints*; but we shall never be Saints if we are not exact in the discharge of those particular duty's which belong to our condition. The virtue requir'd of a General is not proper for a Tradesman; the dutys of a magistrate or of a master of a Family are very different from those which God expects from an Hermite; that virtue which is proper for Seculars, will not suffice for Religious men; even their perfection has different degrees, the virtue of a beginner differs exceedingly from that which God exacts from the most perfect, the surest & most efficacious way to be a Saint

Hæc est voluntas Dei, Sanctificatio vestra. 1. *Thess.* 4. 2.

is to ſeek perfection onely in our Station. It is for this end that the Church ſets before us the examples of great Saints of all ages and conditions; The wiſe woman whom the Scripture celebrates with ſo much applauſe became a Saint in looking after her family; Saint Louis upon the throne, Saint Iſidore at the plough, Saint Elzear at Court, and by the help of that grace which is never wanting to us, every man may if he will, arrive to the perfection of his ſtate and Calling.

Of Small Faults.

He who deſpiſeth little things ſhall fall by degrees, ſaith the *Author of Eccleſiaſticus*, upon which an eminent ſervant of God remarks, that the doctrine contain'd in thoſe words is of great importance to all the world, eſpecially to thoſe who aſpire to perfection; for great matters recommend themſelves ſo that we are naturally more careful and exact in them, but little things are eaſily neglected becauſe we think

Qui ſpernit modica paulatim decidet. *Eccleſ.* 19. 1

them of no consequence; but we deceive our selves, the danger is greater than we imagine, it is this negligence in those small things that has hindred so many from becoming eminently virtuous and perfect in their Station *Saint Bernard* observes that *they who commit the most horrid impyety's begin at first with little faults*; no man is excessively wicked on a sudden; the diseases of the Soul are like those of the body, contracted by degrees: if a little cold, a light indisposition, had been taken in time when it was so easy to cure it, the dying man had been now in perfect health; so when you see a servant of God fall into some scandalous Sin, you may besure (adds that great Saint) that this is not his first fault; it is rare to see a man who has preserv'd the piety of an innocent Life for a great while together, suddenly committ a grievous Sin, if he had taken a little care at first he might easily have prevented the progress of Sin, but because men despis'd the danger while it is small, be

A minimis incipiunt qui in maxima prorunt, nemo repente fit summus.

cauſe they ſlight and indulged themſelves in little imperfections, hence proceed the terrible falls of thoſe who had liv'd ſo well before.

The conſideration that ſo many ſouls are ruin'd by ſuch ſmall beginnings is ſufficient to make us wonder and tremble: would to God men were thorowly perſuaded of this important Truth on which depends the Salvation, or at leaſt the perfection of the greateſt part of mankind. The Devil is too cunning to tempt a ſervant of God to a violation of eſſentiall dutys at firſt, he would have but ſmall ſucceſs if he begun with ſolliciting a fearful Soul to commit a mortal Sin, and therefore he inſinuates himſelfe by ſuch ſmall things till he hath got footing before the Soul perceives it: theſe infidelity's in ſmall things are alwayes punish'd with the loſs of ſome Grace, and by the loſs of that Grace it is depriv'd of many others, without whih it will certainly yeild to temptations in ſome occaſions. This made *S. Gregory ſay that little faults are in ſo-* *Greg. 3. part. ad mar. cal. 34.*

me reſpect more dangerous than great ones: and S. Chryſoſtom ſpeakes thus on the ſame ſubject; *Tho the propoſition appear extraordinary and unheard of, yet I am not afraid to tell you that ſometimes it ſeems to me that we ought to take more care of avoiding ſmall than great faults:* The enormity of theſe fills us with horror, but we eaſily grow familiar with the others becauſe we think them inconſiderable: And after all this ſhall we neglect theſe little faults, of which the Saints were more afraid than of heinous Sins? ſays Saint Auguſtin *Whether the ſhip be ſunk by the violence of the Waves or by the negligence of the Mariners in not pumping out the water that enters at a ſmall leak:* and he adds in another place, *You are upon your guard againſt great Sins, but what have you done to preſerve your ſelfe from little ones? Don't you fear them? have a care leaſt after having thrown your heavy lading over board to lighten your Ship, leaſt after having renounc'd every thing that ſeem'd conſiderable at your entrance into Reli-*

gion, the ſand in the Hold ſink it, have a care leaſt after having eſcap'd the violence of the ſtorms in the tempeſtuous Sea of the world, when you are juſt ready to enter into the port of Religion, have a care leaſt you periſh upon little banks of Sand which ſeem'd nothing, and which you neglected to ſhun, The greateſt Graces are commonly the fruit of fidelity in little things which is it ſelfe the effect of a greater degree of Love to God, if we deprive our ſelves by our coldneſs and want of care of thoſe extraordinary helps, of thoſe ſingular favours which inſpire ſo much courage againſt the ſtrongeſt Temptations; & which are ſo neceſſary in many caſes, how often ſhall we be in doubt whether we have not conſented to temptation? what a great advantage ſhould we find at ſuch a difficult time in having given our ſelves wholly to God, and having thereby merited his ſpecial and free help, by which we are ſure to be enabled to reſiſt all the efforts of the Tempter, and without which we ſhall not only

the expos'd to danger, but we shall perhaps be overcome?

Of Fidelity in little things.

He that is faithful in little things will be faithfull also in great things, and indeed none but great Souls have this Fidelity. They are indeed little things in themselves, but it is no little thing to be faithful to God in the smallest matter: yet this fidelity will be worth nothing if we be negligent in greater things; but we must own that this Fidelity in little things is very great & noble; if we love much we shall neglect nothing that we know is pleasing to those we love.

God did not choose the stoutest & boldest Israelites to overcome the Midianites; one of the greatest victorys the children of Israel ever won was gain'd by *three hundred men who did not kneel down to drink in the River.* What seems of less consequence than the holding up ones hands: Yet the *victory* over the *Amalekites* depended so absolutely

In trecentis viris qui lambuerunt aquas liberabo vos. *Judic.* 7. 7.

Cumque

on *the lifting up Moſes hands* to heaven, that *When ever he held them down the Enemy prevailed.* What do you mean *Joash* cry'd the *Prophet Elisha* to ſmite the Earth but three times, *if you had ſmote it five or ſix times you ſhould have been maſter of all Syria and have utterly deſtroyd* your Enemys. How ſlight was the ceremony on which depended the taking of *Jericho*, (O what a mock would our half devotes who deſpiſe ſmall things have made of it) *when the walls fell down before the people of God?* Infine 'tis ſufficient that Jeſus-Chriſt aſſures us, that heaven, eternal hapineſs, and God himſelfe is the reward of fidelity in little things.

levaret Moyſes manus vincebat Iſrael &c. *Exod.* 17. 11.

Si percuſſiſſes quinquies aut ſexies, percuſſiſſes Synain uſque ad conſumptionem. 4. *Reg.* 13. 19. *Joſ.* 6. 18. 19.

Quia ſuper pauca fuiſti fidelis, intra in gaudium Domini tui. *Matt.* 25. 21. 22.

Of the Source of our Imperfections.

Though the greateſt part of Chriſtians pretend to aſpire to Perfection yet very few attain it, becauſe they are not really willing to be perfect; they readily believe the Doctrines of

the Gospell, & the important maximes upon which all true Piety is groundcd, but they are not sincere in the application of them. They do not dispute the necessity of doing violence to our inclinations in order to obtain heaven, but they find out specious Reasons to excuse themselves from that violence in certain occasions which require much pains: they own themselves bound to subdue their passions, & they fight with them, and frequently gain a kind of victory over them, but they do not meddle with their reigning passions, & this is the cause that all their other victory's signify nothing, for they should have begun with this. We must set a continual watch upon our selves and upon every motion of our hearts that we may suppress all our carnal desires, the many almost imperceptible but continual selfish designs, which make us seek only, tho secretly, to advance our interests, & a thousand other insinuations of selfe Love which surprise the most virtuous, & mingling

themſelves with their beſt actions take away all their merit, or at leaſt diminish their Perfection.

Of the falſe complaiſance which we have for others.

True Piety is never iucommode, it is full of Charity for all the world; a ſolidly virtuous man is affable aud obliging, never troubleſome or uneaſy, but allwayes in good humour, ſtill ready to do ſervice to others, and ſevere only to himſelfe; for the ſpirit of Chriſt is a ſpirit of Peace, & ſweetneſs. This Principle ſelf Love which is ingenious in making advantage of every thiug, employs to deceive many who make profeſſion of Piety, by perſuading them to draw conſequences from it very different from the true ſpirit of Chriſt. Under this pretence it would perſuade us to pleaſe all the world, to diſpleaſe no not thoſe who do not relish our Saviour maxims; but how can we pleaſe him if we pretend not to diſpleaſe them? From hence proceeds

that unhappy, that unworthy complaisance which makes us so often asham'd to take Christs part, & to declare our selves boldly his Disciples, because we would be complaisant and disoblige no body. But where do we find that a punctual observance of our Rule, that modesty, recollection, and purity, and the doing our duty is disobliging? If the imperfect are disoblig'd by these things we can not avoid displeasing them, unless we are willing to betray our Consciences & displease God.

Of Exactness.

We are not afraid of being thought weak or scrupulous, for being very earnest in pursuing our interests, exceeding careful in our wordly affaires, allway's up on the watch to make use of every thing, to let slip no occasion of making our fortunes, on the contrary, it is the way to be esteemed men of sence, able, wise and prudent: but if we apply our selves seriously to the business

of Salvation, if we carefully lay hold one very little opportunity of pleasing God and of growing in virtue; If we be exact in discharging all the dutys of our Station and faithfull in the smallest matters, the world calls us weak & scrupulous, it laughs at our care and blames our conduct: They who are most desirous to please God are often less able to support this than any other difficulty in the practise of virtue, they are better proof against any other persecution: My God! if the earnest desire to please thee were condemn'd by the Infidels, 'tis no more than we might expect, but to meet with this difficulty among Christians, among men who profess to be thy servants, this is one can hardly imagine.

Of the Artifices of Self Love.

My God! how much pains would a little sincerity & truth spare those who serve thee? we do not seek God with simplicity enough, we are not entirely willing to plea-

him, and we alwayes ſeek out ſelves, nay too often we ſeek only our ſelves, even when we pretend to ſeek him. My God! where is the danger of giving our ſelves wholly and entirely to thee, that we take ſo much time to reſolve? Tis ſelfe love that ſpoils all & it is too true that the greateſt part of mankind is govern'd only by it. All the difference between ſpiritual men and thoſe that are not ſo is, that ſelf Love is bareſac'd in the latter, and leſs viſible & more diſtinguish'd in the former; and if we would take the pains to reflect on the true motive of the greateſt part of thoſe actions which ſeem leaſt imperfect, we ſhould find an hundred windings and turnings of ſelf Love which renders them all unfruitful.

Of the tender Love of God to thoſe who ſerve him.

All the Sanctity and perfection of a Chriſtian Life conſiſts according to S. Baſil in Looking upon God as the cauſe of all things & in

conforming our ſelves entirely to his holy Will. If we were thorowly convinc'd of this important truth, what a real ſweetneſs ſhould we find in a ſpiritual Life? And what perfect tranquility ſhould we enjoy being aſſureed that all that happens in the World (except Sin) proceeds from a particular Providence of God who loves us tenderly? All the world ought to have this Confidence in God, but much more Religious men whom he hath adopted in a peculiar manner & whom he hath inſpir'd with the Sentiments which dutiful Chilldren should have for their Father. *My Father and my Mother have forsaken me but the Lord hath receiv'd me*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; 'tis an advantageous exchange to chooſe ſo good a Father in the room of him we have left: ſo that now we have a right to ſay with confidence, *the Lord taketh care of me therefore I shall not want; I am poor and needy but the Lord provideth for me*, who can reflect that God himſelfe provides for him, that his eternal Providence watches

Pſ. 26. 10.

Rodri. Tr. 3. c. 10.

Pſ. 22. 1.

Pſ. 69. 6.

over him with the ſame goodneſs and care as if he had no other creatures to preſerve in the whole world, who can think of this without feeling himſelfe tranſported with joy & love to God? We ſhall find reaſon enough to love him and to abandon our ſelves entirely to him, if we do but reflect on the obligations we have to his fatherly Providence, and on the tender Love he bears us.

You believe that ſickneſs is the effect of chance: You thought that that humiliation, that mortification proceeded from the paſſions of men: They may indeed act out of Paſſion, but do you know that God makes theſe very paſſions ſerve to bring about his deſigns for your advantage? Men perhaps ſeek to ſatisfy their revenge by uſing you ill, but God permits it only for your good.

When Joſephs Brethren ſold him into Egypt they follow'd the dictates of their vengeance, and deſign'd his ruine, but God made their barbarous action a means of Joſeph's

Glory? Since we have such powerfull motives to excite us to put all our trust in God, why do we rely no more upon him? it is because we are not hearty towards him, we give him what he requires, only by halves, imperfectly and unwillingly; we continually refuse him some part of what he demands, and this is the true reason that our request are accompanyed with so many fears & so little Faith.

How far we are to imitate Virtuous men.

Good examples are a great help to us, we may easily be Saints if we converse with Saints; the exercise of virtue is much less difficult in the company of those who truly practise it; but we must have a care of taking any man for our pattern, tho he seem never so virtuous; we must imitate his virtue, but we must still remember that he who is eminently virtuous now may be perverted, and that the most perfect is he that has fewest faults. When we propose to

our ſelves to imitate any man we are in danger of imitating his very imperfections: Our opinion of his virtue makes us copy every thing he do's, we follow blindly all his examples, & very often we imitate his faults more than his virtues.

Of inſenſibility proceeding from careleſſneſs.

How can a Religious man who lives careleſſly or a Prieſt who is indevout, and who diſhonours his ſacred Character by his manners, think without trembling on the accouut they muſt give to God of all the graces they have abus'd, of all the good which they should have done & of which they have render'd themſelves incapable, & of all the meanes of ſanctification of which they would make no uſe? Theſe unhappy men are like thoſe who after having ſerv'd God fervently for ſome time, grow careleſs and weary of his ſervice: God uſually puniſhes their infidelity in this Life, & ſome times without delay by an

insensibility which often degenerates into hardness of heart; we have a terrible example of this insensibility in Judas, who had without doubt receiv'd singulars favours from Jesus-Christ, no sooner was he grown careless and had perverted himselfe but he fell into a strange insensibility which became incurable; he could hear his Saviour say the most touching things in the world without being at all affected, when the blessed Jesus press'd his Conversion in the tendereſt and most loving as well as most forcible manner, when the son of God discover'd the wicked intentions of that Traitor without naming him, all the rest of the Apostles trembled for themselves, Judas only to whom he spake is unconcern'd: when a soul is insensible it soon grows impudent; Judas has the face to ask if his Master means him: Christ conceals it no longer, but this answer which should have fill'd him with confusion makes no impression on his hardned heart; he hears coldly that terrible threatning from his Saviours

Unus ex vobis tradet me, *Marc. 14. 18.*

Tu dixisti. *Matt. 6. 64.*

Væ homini

illi per quem Filius hominis tradetur. *Matt.* 26. 24.

mouth. *Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed*, & remains insensible; Jesus condescends to *wash his feet*, to give himselfe to him in the communion, to exhort and threaten him, yet nothing moves him, nothing can stop him, he goes out and puts his impious design in execution, and accomplishes his black and malicious ingratitude by a treacherous kiss. How should we tremble at the thought of this insensibility? It is the most dreadful of judgments and so much the more dreadful in that it is not perceiv'd by those who lye under it? The surest mark that we are not in that state is a fear least we should be in it? nothing is so difficult as to convert those who are not sensible of their want of Conversion.

Of the thoughts of Death.

The thought of death is a most powerful argument to convince us of the vanitys of this Life: we shall easily be disgusted with the empty pleasures of the would, its imagi-

nary honors, and its falſe Riches for which we weary our ſelves, if we ſeriouſly reflect where they all end; in a winding sheet, in a Coffin; in a grave; in worms and duſt, there are the end of all humane Pride and greatneſs. Form as many vaſt projects as you pleaſe, rely upon your wiſdom, friends, and Riches, you muſt quit them all whether you will or no, and they will all abandon you. Only thou o God! doſt never forſake thoſe who ſerve thee, I will therefore love and ſerve thee, & none but thee.

Of our condeſcention to the Imperfect.

It is ſurprizing that men have ſo little conſideration for fervent Chriſtians, while they have all the condeſcention in the world for the careleſs & imperfect. But we do not ſee the ſpecial hand of providence who herein favours thoſe whom he loves moſt: is a man truly virtuous? we make no ſcru-

ple of excerciſing his patience, his deſires are frequently croſs'd, and he is often forc'd to do what he do's not like, yet at the ſame time we refuſe nothing to the imperfect whether it be that we uſe them like ſick men that are paſt recovery whom we let have what they pleaſe or that God by a terrible judgment lets them alone in this Life, and leaves them to their own imaginations. However hard this diſtinction ſeems, it is much for the advantage of thoſe who ſerve God faithfully, and renders them much more eſteem'd by all who judge wiſely and who are animated by the Spirit of Jeſus-Chriſt.

Of natural inclinations to Virtue.

Men of ſoft and peacable tempers who ſeem born with a natural propenſity to virtue are in great danger of being but indifferently virtuous and of making no progreſs in the way of perfection if they do not keep a ſtrict watch over all the mo-

tions of their hearts; else their natural tranquility will degenerate in to an indolence which is very a greable to self Love, so that they wil take no pains to acquire great virtues and will content themselves with an obscure Life, & with a seeming moderation not founded upon humility but the pure effect of self Love, which is unwilling to take pains and chooses a moderate virtue for fear of meeting with oppositions and sufferings in the pursuit of a more sublime. But alas! they who satisfy themselves with an ordinary virtue will in all probability live and dye destitute of all true virtue.

Of true Zeal.

It is a dangerous fault to be uneasy when others do as many or more good works than we: would to God that all Preachers were eminent and successful; would to God that every Director of souls had the gift of wisdom and discerning of spirits, the zeal and solid piety

which are ſo neceſſary for all Directors; ſo God be glorifyed what matter it whether I or another be the inſtrument? when the good ſucceſs of others in the exerciſe of their Miniſtry is a real ſatisfaction to us it is a ſure ſign that we ſeek only his Glory.

Of ſincerity in the Service of God.

Many deſire to be perfect, and from time to time endeavour after it, yet how few attain it? That which hinders the greateſt part from advancing in the way of virtue is a want of ſincerity in Gods ſervice, ſome little affections which they do not and will not renounce, 'tis ſelfe Love diſguis'd under thes ſpecious names of moderation, good ſence, prudence, and civility; in fine it is a certain ſecret pride which corrupts the greateſt part of their beſt actions. God will be ſerv'd with a dove like ſimplicity, with an uprighteneſs of ſoul that cannot ſtoop to thoſe little arts of ſelfe

Love which are ſo prevalent every where; we ſeek an eaſy Director, we torment our brains to forge ſomething like Reaſons to excuſe our ſelves from ſome duty's which we know in our Conſciences God requires of us, but which we find unpleaſant, and are unwilling to perform; Do we think to deceive God by theſe artifices? The number of thoſe who ſeek God in ſpirit is very ſmall, who ſerve him with that true ſimplicity which is neceſſary to Perfection; how many inſtead of endeavouring to pleaſe God, Study to perſuade themſelves that they may pleaſe their own Appetites in every thing, without diſpleaſing him? If they make him any little Sacrifice; They preſently find out ſome way to make themſelves amends. How come ſo many Profeſſors of Piety to be ſo very ſenſible in the imaginary points of Honour? The tone of a voice, a diſobliging word diſturbs them, Let them make as much uſe as they pleaſe of the words Modeſt, and humble, true humility is inſepara-

ble from Patience and ſweetneſs. Many think that they are truly humble becauſe they have a mean opinion of themſelves, but they deceive themſelves if they are not willing that others ſhould have the ſame thoughts of them. It is not ſufficient to know that we have no true virtue or merit, we muſt be willing to have others believe it too.

Of ſubmiſſion of our Wills.

It is generally ſaid, and perhaps not without appearance of Reaſon, that devout men are fond of their own opinions; but it is an error to think that men who will always follow their own Wills, and are obſtinately conceited of their own ſentiments, can be truly devout. This ſubmiſſion of our Wills is that renouncing of our ſelves which Jeſus-Chriſt requires ſo poſitively, and commands ſo often in the Goſpell, and without which we cannot be his Diſciples. And indeed we can never be truly virtuous

without this ſubmiſſion both of our Underſtanding and Will.

Of the Love of Chriſt.

If any thing (ſays a great ſervant of God) could ſhake my faith in the Miſtery of the Euchariſt, it would not be a doubt of that infinite power which God exerts there: I ſhould ſooner ſtagger at the exceeding Love of Jeſus in giuing himſelfe there to us; for I am not able to comprehend how men can believe that he is preſent on our Altars, and that they receive him in this adorable Sacrament, And yet be indifferent and cold to him, be forgetful of and diſguſted with him.

Who would not expect that ſuch a wonderful Prodigy of Love, ſhould excite, at leaſt, a deſire, an earneſtneſs, and exceeding tenderneſs in the hearts of all men? But Alas! it is juſt contrary; We act as if we ſhould have lov'd him more, if he had lov'd us leſs; I tremble, O my God! at the thought of the

indignitys and outrages which the impiety of bad Christians, and the fury of Hereticks have offer'd to thee in this Auguſt Sacrament; how Sacrilegiouſly have they profan'd thy Altars, and thy Churches? how impiouſly an'd ſcornfully have they often treated the Body of Chriſt? Can any Chriſtian call to mind theſe horrible impiety's without being earneſtly deſirous to repair by all poſſible means thoſe barbarous outrages? And how can a Chriſtian live, and not have that deſire?

Have I often thought on this? Do I think often on it? I who appear ſo ſeldom at the foot of the Altar, and who am ſo unwilling to ſpare a little Time to adore my Saviour, a ſpecially at thoſe hours when the Churches are leaſt frequented.

My God! I will think ſeriouſly on it for the future, becauſe I will now begin to love thee truly; and certainly it is high time for me to begin: I have made ſeveral reſolutions to love thee and have broke them all, but I am confident this

will be effectuall; Yes my Divine Saviour, I am fully resolv'd to love thee, and to love thee without any reserve: thou hast loved me, and wouldst have me love thee, and therefore I am sure that thou wilt not refuse me thy Grace to enable me to love thee; full of this hope and confidence I am bold to say with thy Holy Apostle, *who shall separate me from the Love of Christ? I am certain that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principality's, nor Powers, neither* the sight of *things present*, *nor* the prospect of *things to come, nor greatness, nor adversity, nor any Creature, shall ever be able to separate me from, or deprive me of the Love of God which is in Jesus-Christ our Lord.*

Quis ergò nos separabit à charitate Christi? Certus sum quia neque mors neque vita, neque Angeli, neque Principatus, neque virtutes, neque instantia, neque futura; neque fortitudo, neque altitudo, neque profundum, neque creatura alia, poterit nos separare à charitate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu Domino nostro. *Rom.* 8. 35. 38. 39.

FINIS.

THE COMPOSER NOT understanding English, many litteral faults have escap'd correction, which the Reader will easily mend, as also the mistakes in the Stops and points.

Such faults as spoil the sence, are here set down.

P. 5. l. 29. blot out, *not*. p. 17. the last line. r. *of our*. p. 25. l. 11. r. *their vanity*. p. 26. l. 3. & 4. for *at* r. *as*. p. 29. l. 8. blot out, *in* p. 40. l. 13. r. *like them*. p. 58. l. 15. blot out, *you are put in that dignity*. p. 73. l. 25. after *Salvation*, r. *have we made good use of the general?* p. 80. l. 12. & 13. for, *do compose*. r. *discompose*. p. 97. l. 1. r. *he is like*. p. 98. l. 11. blot out, *not*. p. 112. l. 26. & 27. for *confession*. r. *con-*

verſion. p. 121. l. 28. for *Hove* r. *Above.* p. 153. l. 18. for *owne.* r. owe. p. 171. l. 19. after. *our Wills.* r. *to his.* p. 203. l. 9. for *any.* r. my. p. 208. l. 3. for *of* r. or. p. 216. l. r. for *OCTOBER.* r. *NOVEMBER.* p. 216. l. 3. for *willingneſs.* r. *unwillingneſs.* p. 217. l. 24. for *thare.* r. share. p. 227. l. 16. for , *of.* r. *if.* p. 238. l. 6. for. *S. Bonavenre:* r. *Bonaventure.* p. 258. l. r. r. *Sin hath.* p. 266. l. 22. for. *to.* r. *do.* p. 272. l. 1. for. *thoughts.* r. *tongues.* p. 277. l. 21. for *applicerion.* r. *application.* p. 280. l. 17. for, *orldly.* r. worldly. p. 282. l. 2. & 3. blot out , *of the ill uſe of the means of Salvation.* p. 290. l. 16. for *this.* r. *'tis.* p. 293. l. 9. for. *chamns.* r. *charms.* p. 301. l. 17. for *own'd.* r. *vow'd ?* p. 325. l. 7. for . *reaſon.* r. *ſeaſon.* l. 8. for , *for Salvation.* r. out their ſalvation. p. 330. l. 16. r. It matters not ſay's S. Auguſtin. p. 332. l. 1. for *the.* r. *be.* p. 335. l. 23. & 24. for. *to diſpleaſe. no.* r. *not to diſpleaſe any man, no.* p. 337. l. 2. for. *one very.* r. *on every.* p. 337. l. 20. after , *is.* r.

what, p. 352, l. 20, for *especialy*, r. *especially*.

There are ſome quotations omitted in the Margin, and divers faults in thoſe that are inſerted; it is needleſs to remark them for thoſe who do not underſtand Latin: and they who do, know how to correct them.